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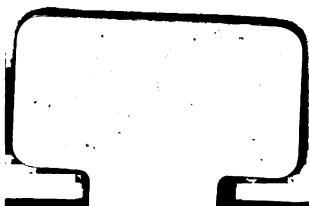
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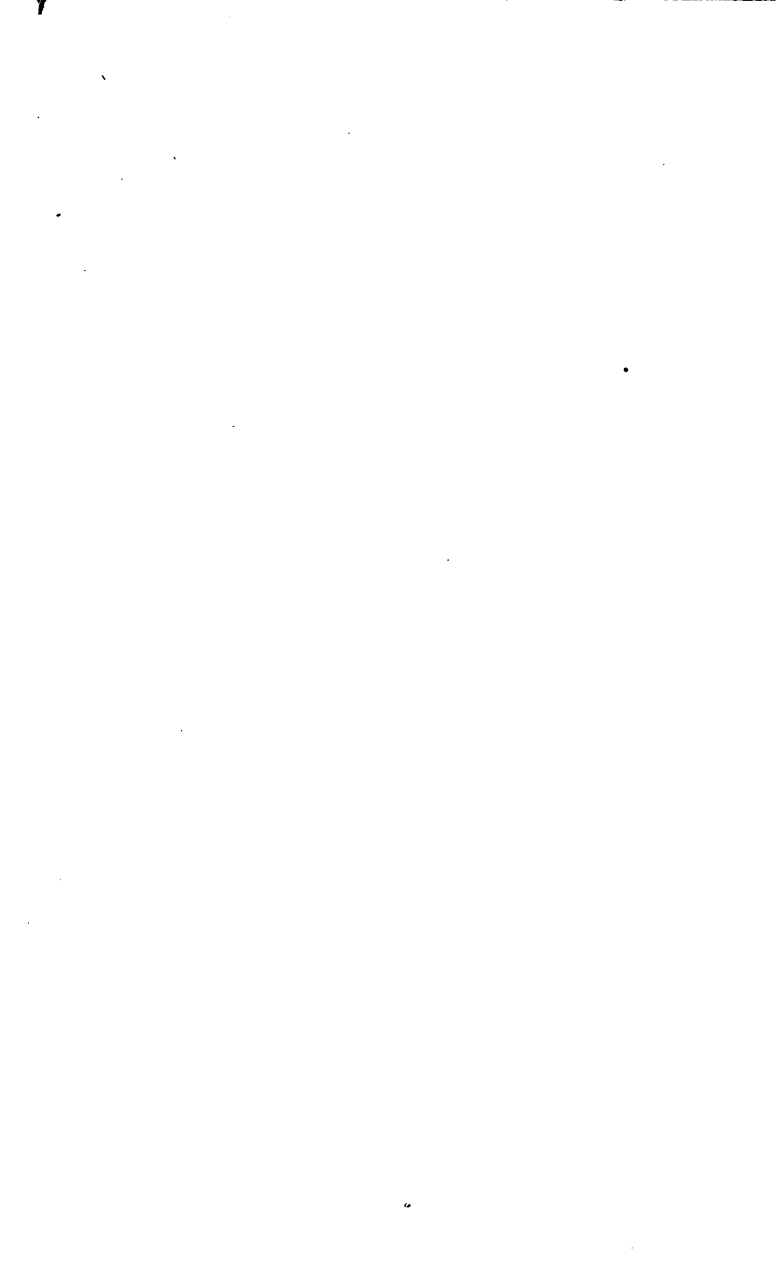


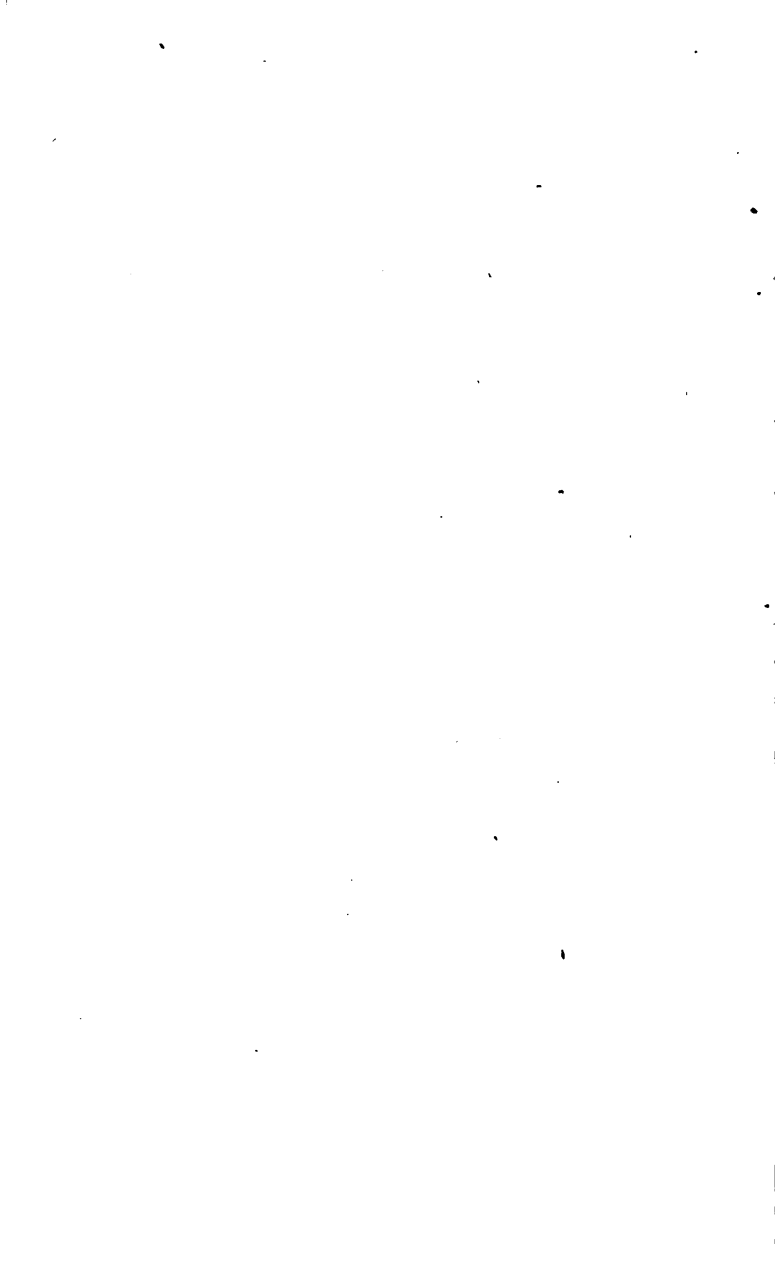
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A SUMMER

PORT PHILLIP











VILLA ON THE YARRA NEAR MELBOURNE

Published by W. Tait Edin. 5. 1843.

ROBERT EDWARDS WILSON

WILLIAM TAIT, EDINBURGH.

JOHN N. MARSHALL, & CO., LONDON,  
AND JOHN GUNSON, GLASGOW.

MDCCCXIII.



**A SUMMER**  
**AT**  
**PORT PHILLIP.**

**BY THE HONOURABLE**  
**ROBERT DUNDAS MURRAY.**



**WILLIAM TAIT, EDINBURGH;**  
**SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, & CO., LONDON;**  
**AND JOHN CUMMING, DUBLIN.**

**MDCCCXLIII.**

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**EDINBURGH:**  
**Printed by WILLIAM TAIT, Prince's Street.**

## PREFACE.

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WHETHER or not the contents of this little volume are such as to interest the general reader, is a question that possibly admits of dispute. Though, in truth, the results of a Summer's residence at Port Phillip, it was no part of the Author's plan, while sojourning there, to collect such information as should serve only to fill a volume with the reading usually found in a "summer's excursion" through a foreign land. His chief aim has been to furnish a faithful narrative of the rapid rise and progress of this, probably, the least known of our colonial possessions,—to exhibit its actual state in relation to those points to which the emigrant directs his attention,—and, in short, to render the work of some utility to those who, overborne amid the universal competition of labour and capital in this country, would gladly rally their strength on some other arena, were it but displayed to their view. With this end in sight, much more might undoubtedly have been

said upon the topics to which the Author has adverted ; but it was enough for his purpose to convey a general outline of the position and prospects of the colony, without embracing such details as might be wearisome to the reader.

One word is requisite regarding the designation of the colony. By the term "Port Phillip" is understood the district or province of Port Phillip. There is no port or town bearing that name, as is usually inferred ; and the bay is the only geographical feature to which it is applied : whence, most probably, it was transferred to the surrounding country.

To the gentlemen connected with the Melbourne press, the Author's acknowledgments are due, for the aid which his labours have received from their intimate acquaintance with all that relates to the colony. To Mr Arden's history of its early settlement he is largely indebted ; and, in particular, he owes much to the communications of Mr Kerr of *The Port Phillip Patriot*, whose Melbourne Almanac, published annually, is a valuable repository of information, and should be consulted by every emigrant.

EDINBURGH, *October*, 1840.

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## SUMMER AT PORT PHILLIP.

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### CHAPTER I.

Entrance to Port Phillip Bay.—Its Dimensions.—Hobson's Bay.  
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 The Yarra.—Melbourne.—Its Position and State of Pro-  
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 —Population.

EARLY in the morning of the 14th of Sep-  
 tember 1841, the barque *Tasmania* was run-  
 ning down before a favouring wind towards the  
 narrow passage by which Port Phillip bay  
 communicates with the sea. For some time  
 after daybreak no land was visible except on  
 the left, an open sea meeting the view on the  
 opposite quarter; but as we rapidly advanced,  
 Cape Schank rose up on the right, and our  
 course then lay between shores that stretched

away on either side, bold and high, and everywhere surmounted by the evergreen forest that from thence commenced its journey inland. In the distance ahead, the termination of our voyage appeared nigh; for the land gradually closed in to a narrow inlet, forming apparently the bottom of a deep and dangerous gulf, as the furious surf with which it was lined led us to believe. On a nearer approach, however, the rocky coast in front was seen to be parted by an opening, whose smooth waters told it to be the entrance to some inner haven. The contracted passage, which thus comes into view so unexpectedly, serves to separate two promontories scarcely three miles apart at the points nearest each other: that on the west is called Point Lonsdale; while the other, Point Nepean, is a long strip of rocks and sand, upon rounding which we were at once shut out from the open sea, and transferred to the threshold of a magnificent bay. Port Phillip bay, into which we had thus passed, is certainly one of the noblest of its kind; but in reality it is an inland sea of considerable extent, along whose winding shores are to be found many inlets and bays, each one capable of

sheltering whole fleets. Nowhere does it exceed forty miles in length by thirty in breadth; and among the indentations that mark its outline, the most conspicuous is Geelong bay, a fine expanse of water running deep into its western shore. At the upper extremity, lies Hobson's bay, the port of Melbourne; and thither our course was shaped, a pilot having come on board ere we had been many minutes inside the "heads," and whose white cottage, perched on a wooded cliff to the left, we had remarked long before the bay itself became visible. It was nearly sunset before we cast anchor; but enough of light remained to show that the spot which brought our voyage to a conclusion, though in point of settlement the oldest part of the colony, had lost few or none of the wild features peculiar to a new country. On one side lay what appeared to be an untrodden forest commencing at the water's edge, and, between that and the horizon, darkening the soil with its mantle of foliage; as far as we could see there were no signs indicating an effort on the part of man to disturb its solitude. Neither the smoke nor the clearing of the solitary settler were visible in the distance;

and but for a house or two on the beach close at hand, we should have concluded that no footstep ever ventured there in search of a livelihood. Altogether, the impression produced was of an unfavourable nature; and in spite of our inclination to look with satisfaction on everything around, we could not help feeling something like disappointment upon turning away from the prospect. We had yet to learn, however, how much wealth lay beneath an exterior so unpromising; and on this occasion, as well as on many others subsequently, we fell, like almost all strangers, into the general error of measuring everything by notions formed elsewhere. We had expected to find an English scene, or at least something approaching to it; and not finding such a scene, we did not imagine that an Australian one could be as full of riches, though perhaps less pleasing to the eye. Of that forest tract, dreary as it seemed, there was scarcely an acre that did not nourish some of the numerous flocks and herds that have raised the colony to its present pitch of prosperity; it was traversed daily by the shepherd or cattle-driver, whose huts were to be met with at no

great distance from each other ; and in every direction there ran tracks and bridle-roads, dusty from the constant passing and repassing of settlers to and from their stations, or from the passage of drays and other vehicles to remote establishments, many days' journey away in the interior. Nigh to the beach a large portion of land, as yet undistinguishable among the surrounding wood, had been purchased from government on the terms of a special survey. The surveyors had just completed their task of dividing and subdividing it into small sections ; and for these the sums offered at the next sale would not be at a less rate than twenty pounds per acre. We did not then know that the cool breezes from the bay make this spot very desirable as a residence during the height of summer, and that its value arose from its proximity to Melbourne, the inhabitants of which were beginning to resort thither during that sultry season. Not long after my arrival, several houses were to be seen rising up under the workman's hand on this very spot ; gardens were laid out and enclosures made ; and probably, before another year comes round, every headland along the

beach will be crowned with its villa, and the scene that once struck us as so desolate and lone, will become the resort and abode of hundreds.

On the opposite side of the bay to that which I have described, is situated Williamstown ; it stands on a low flat, flanked on the west by a point of land, the lighthouse upon which is a prominent object coming up the bay. As the port of Melbourne, much, if not the whole, of its prosperity may be traced to the traffic which passes by it, this being the furthest point which vessels are enabled to reach on their way to the former town ; they are therefore compelled to discharge their cargoes here, and thus send them to their ultimate destination. The town itself covers a considerable space of ground ; not so much from the number of its dwellings, as from a propensity that disposes the houses all over the colony to keep away at the furthest distance from each other consistent with convenience. In spite, however, of this circumstance, the place wore a thriving look, of which we had abundant proof in the magnitude and solidity of its warehouses, numbers of which rose above the houses that lay scattered in every direction.

Mingled with these were hôtels and shops that took up their position without much regard to regularity ; some close to the jetties formed for the accommodation of passengers, while the greater portion seemed to have had no other object in view, than the best site for displaying the huge signs with which they were adorned. The population is now rated at four hundred souls, and it ranks third among the towns in the province. From this point you have it in your power to proceed to Melbourne by either of three routes : one by passing up the Yarra-Yarra in a boat ; another leads along the northern bank of the same river ; while by the third it is necessary to cross over to the opposite side of the bay, and thence follow a road, or rather track, of little more than two miles in length. The latter route winds through a sandy waste overrun with trees and underwood ; and, from the abundance of shells, and other marine remains strewed on its surface, evidently reclaimed from the sea. On nearing the town, the best view of which is to be obtained by coming up this road, the Yarra-Yarra, or the “overflowing,” for such is the meaning of its native



name, is still to be crossed ; and this is easily done by a kind of floating bridge, which places you on the other side in a few seconds. While hesitating as to the road we should take, a small steamer plying on the river came alongside, and offered to convey the passengers up to the town. This decided the question ; and stepping on board without further delay, in a few moments we found ourselves stemming the current of the river. The Yarra empties its waters into the bay at no great distance from Williamstown ; and, judging from its depth, appears admirably adapted to favour the purposes of commerce. Unfortunately, however, for its navigation on a great scale, a bar of mud extends across its channel about two miles from the sea, and closes the ascent to vessels drawing more than seven feet of water. Above and below that impediment there is never less than a depth of four fathoms, however contracted the channel may be ; and hence the value of a waterway such as this may be conceived, requiring only the labour of a few months to render it the finest line of communication imaginable. A little way above the bar, the river diminishes in volume very sen-

sibly, assuming quite the appearance of a canal filled to the brim with a sluggish tide, and winding through an impenetrable jungle that at times rose up like a wall on either bank, and echoed from side to side the sound of the steamer's paddles. It is one of its peculiarities, that close to the brink the same depth is to be found as in the centre ; a circumstance that renders its narrowness less obnoxious than it would otherwise be. As we passed on, it was strange to witness numbers of brigs and schooners availing themselves of this advantage, and while waiting for the tide to turn, hauled close up to the bank, where they lay moored as snugly as in a dock, though their masts and yards were interlocked with the branches of the trees that overhung the water. The sun had set long before we approached Melbourne ; and all that we could descry of the town when the steamer came to a stop, were its lights at some little distance, to reach which we had to cross an intervening space of darkness ; an attempt by no means pleasant to those who knew not where a false step might precipitate them. Thanks, however, to the kindness of the captain of the little steamer,

who, with a huge lantern in hand, came forward as our pilot, we succeeded in pursuing in safety a muddy path amid the prostrate logs, the ruts, holes, and other perils of a forest but recently laid low ; and before we had time to decide whether some detached houses by the way, were or were not the outskirts of the town, our obliging conductor pointed to a respectable-looking inn, and, with the assurance that it was one of the most comfortable in the place, forthwith took his departure. Next morning our occupation was to make ourselves acquainted with each one of the eight or ten streets to which Melbourne is as yet restricted. To find our way through these was no difficult matter ; not so much on account of the smallness of the town, as from the circumstance of its founders having laid down their plan with such laudable precision as to make each street as straight as an arrow, thereby affording to the stranger no opportunity of mistaking his way ; for whatever be the direction he takes, the last house in the street is to be seen, no matter how distant it be. Much praise, however, is certainly due to the wisdom that selected this as the site of

a great commercial emporium, such as Melbourne is probably destined to become. The town rests upon the northern or right bank of the Yarra, bordering which there is a narrow flat, thinly sprinkled with houses, that approach each other more closely as they recede from the river. The houses, however, in that quarter, form only the outskirts to the main body of the town, which extends along a rising ground further back, the bank of which, sloping down to the flat already mentioned, had probably been the ancient boundaries of a mighty stream, now diminished to the current that fills the channel of the Yarra. On the crest of this eminence, and down its sides, the houses are drawn up in the form of a parallelogram; the principal streets running parallel to the river for the distance of a mile, and at various intervals intersected by shorter ones that cross at right angles. Towards each end the ground swells into elevations of moderate height, crowned by churches and other public buildings: the view from these positions embracing a circuit of many miles; on one side, the distant bay, with the Yarra lazily winding to join it; and on the land side, a wilder-

ness of forest stretching from the hilly ranges that break the horizon in various points, up to the suburbs of the town. Unlike the uniformity that prevails in the arrangement of the streets, there is enough of irregularity in the construction and size of the houses themselves to satisfy a lover of the picturesque. Looking down Collins Street, the principal thoroughfare, the eye encounters every variety of building, from the brick-house of three storeys, to the low tenement of wood, only a few degrees superior to a booth at a village fair. Here and there in the line occurs a gap not yet filled up, where, perhaps, a shattered relic of the primæval forest shows a few green leaves; or, more melancholy still, displays a ticket that testifies, that here there is "ground to sell." But such intervals as these, still frequent enough in the suburbs, are rapidly vanishing in this the central street of Melbourne; and no long period must elapse ere it presents an uninterrupted line of shops and places of business not much less than a mile in length. Of the shops, we found the generality equal to those that are usually seen in a country town; but we were not prepared for

some that, for extent and elegance of external decoration, would stand a comparison with the best in Cheapside. In another point, also, they might compete very successfully, and that is in the extravagance of their rents. In this street the rents of shops vary from two to four hundred pounds a-year, according to the advantages of situation or the accommodation they afford; and hitherto they have suffered no reduction; neither affected by the great increase in buildings of that class which has recently taken place, nor by the pressure of that commercial crisis that lately paralyzed the whole of the Australian colonies, and one of the results of which was to depreciate landed ~~as~~ well as every other description of property, in a remarkable degree.

Beyond Melbourne the river becomes no longer navigable. Just in front of the town a ledge of rocks crosses from bank to bank, forming a rapid of a few feet descent, down which the river rushes with an impetuosity that allows none but boats of a small size to ascend, and these only when the tide is at its highest. So far, however, from this being considered a disadvantage by the inhabitants

of Melbourne, I question much whether they would not have attempted to construct something of the kind, with the view of checking the upward course of the tide, which, if nothing interposed at this point, would flow for several miles higher up, and thus place them under the serious inconvenience of drawing their supplies of fresh water from a great distance. They owe it, therefore, to this natural barrier, that the greatest desideratum in Australia, a pure and wholesome stream of water, has been obtained from the first, as readily as in any metropolis in Europe; nothing more being requisite than to send a water-cart to the river's side, a hundred yards above the rapid, where, at all times, it may be filled at very little trouble and expense. The business, however, of conveying water to the inhabitants, has fallen into the hands of a race of men who may be seen plying their vocation, all day long, through the streets of Melbourne, without the stranger being perhaps aware how great are the profits of an occupation simple as theirs appears to be. But out of such insignificant means, there are many who have amassed what to them are

considerable fortunes ; and the fact of their having done so, affords an instructive lesson to the industrious classes at home ; not so much because it apprizes them of the enhanced prices which their labour commands when transferred to the colony, but because it unfolds the existence of numerous bypaths to wealth only to be found in a new country like this. They will find that the new wants from time to time springing up, in a country as yet far removed from maturity, afford a freer scope for individual enterprise than the beaten tracks they pursue at home, without, at the same time, demanding greater exertions ; and the discovery and supplying of these, as this instance among many proves, is sure to reward those who are the first to turn towards them. At present a good deal of competition prevails, with its consequent tendency to lower prices ; but even under such circumstances, no water-carrier would feel satisfied unless he earned, at least, two pounds per week, besides paying all expenses. That this is very little, compared with former gains, may be gathered from the fact, that there are one or two individuals, of careful habits, who have contrived



to accumulate, in the course of two years, upwards of one thousand pounds a-piece; the stock in trade with which they commenced consisting of a horse and cart, the cost of which might probably range from eighty to a hundred pounds. Then, again, to facilitate the process of filling the casks, some one found it more convenient to set up a pump at the river's side, by means of which he was enabled to load his cart at one half of the time and labour expended in following the old method. This also became a source of profit, and was the signal to a host of imitators among the class engaged in this trade, who made no pause until they had lined the northern bank of the river, for a long way above the town, with a multitude of rude machines, which may be seen standing wherever a spot suitable for drawing water could be found. For the use of one of these it was, and probably still is, the usage to demand five shillings weekly; and as there was seldom less than half a dozen customers to each, the cost of erecting which never at any time exceeded twenty pounds, it is very easy for the reader to calculate how many hundreds per cent each speculator suc-

ceeded in realizing from his investment in this line.

At the bottom of the "falls," as the rapid is termed, the river expands into a semicircular basin, capable of containing a considerable number of vessels. Perhaps no circumstance connected with the town is destined to exercise a happier effect on its fortunes than the possession of a natural harbour like this, sufficiently spacious to accommodate all the shipping it may attract for many years to come. Even in the event of becoming inconveniently crowded, it readily admits of further enlargement, by the formation of docks in the soft alluvial flat which bounds its southern side. Here, also, prevails the same depth which, with but one exception, marks the course of the river from this point to the sea; and at a short distance from the bank, vessels of large tonnage may float in perfect security. At the time when we landed, its northern margin, for the space of two hundred yards below the "falls," was one line of lighters and coasting vessels, arriving and departing with every tide, and giving to this remotest of seaports a degree of life and activity we had not been

prepared to expect. The bank against which they were drawn up, trodden down by busy feet into a hard pavement, served all the purposes of a wharf; and, though a tolerable substitute during the summer's heat, it was easy to foresee the state to which its clayey surface would return on the approach of the winter's rains. Latterly, a partial attempt has been made to remedy some of the evils arising out of this state of nature in which the port has existed ever since its occupation; the relief afforded consisting in the construction of a wooden scaffolding round a portion of the harbour, intended, it is believed, to represent a wharf. Tardy and incomplete as is this trifling improvement, it is in keeping with the wisdom which has placed in the hands of the executive at Sydney the sole power to project such works as the necessities of Melbourne might require. It is difficult to see the merits of that policy, which leads the authorities at the seat of government to control every act of a merely local nature, relating to a dependency from which they are distant six hundred miles. At so great a distance it is scarcely possible they should set the same

value upon inconveniences as those on the spot where such exist; and hence the remissness observable in the prosecution of public works, notwithstanding the many and urgent remonstrances put forth by the inhabitants of Melbourne on this head. Thus, for instance, no subject has called forth louder complaints than the want of a bridge across the Yarra, by which North Melbourne might be united with a populous suburb on the other side. One of the most frequented thoroughfares about the town leads in this direction;—not a few individuals have perished from the upsetting of boats, and accidents of a like nature, in crossing the river. The cost of constructing a bridge, from the favourable nature of the locality, would be comparatively unimportant; while it cannot be said that funds for that and other purposes have ever been wanting; but as yet Melbourne is without its bridge, and is probably destined to remain so until a governor is drowned in being ferried across; and then, and not till then, will the authorities be alive to the safety of the thousands who must trust to that tedious and insecure mode of passing, or be debarred from crossing at all. In the

vicinity of the harbour stands the custom-house, on a site overlooking the river and its southern bank. It is a solid and spacious building, constructed of a dark-coloured stone found in the neighbourhood, and is conspicuous among its sister edifices in the public service, as being the only one which, in the extent of its accommodations, has kept pace with the rapid growth of the colony. With this solitary exception, the stranger might pass every other public building in Melbourne, without seeing in them anything to attract his attention, except, perhaps, their more than primitive simplicity of character. The court of justice is represented by a humble dwelling, not unlike a barn in appearance, through the shingle roof of which the sun's rays beat with an intensity undiminished by aught in the shape of a ceiling, unless we except a kind of canopy of lath and plaster immediately over the spot where the judge presides. Hence it happens that, during the heat of summer, the interior forms a retreat about as pleasant as the Black Hole of Calcutta, to which, indeed, from its narrow limits and want of ventilation, it may be aptly compared. Of

the same style of architecture: is the office of police magistrate, a wooden structure of very moderate dimensions; and, considering the frail nature of the material employed in its construction, it is a matter of wonder how it has weathered the stormy scenes sometimes enacted within its walls. The case is, however, very different with regard to places of public worship. The Presbyterians, Wesleyans, and Independents, meet in their respective churches, which are all constructed of brick, and if not elegant in appearance, are, however, both spacious and comfortable. An Episcopalian, as well as a Roman Catholic church, is in process of erection; the former is built of stone, and, from its magnitude and the superiority of its design, will, when completed, be without a rival in Melbourne. Its situation, too, is highly favourable, crowning the eminence upon which rests the western flank of the town, while the other churches stand on a similar elevation to the eastward.

The funds necessary for the erection of these edifices are furnished partly by subscription and partly by government. As soon as each sect has collected what it deems sufficient for its

purpose, an application is made to the colonial treasury, by which a sum is then added, equal in amount to the subscriptions received. It is in this way that all the churches in Melbourne have been built, as well as those in other parts of the colony; and in addition to such aid, the government provides the pastor chosen by the congregation, with a salary of £150 a-year. In thus rendering assistance to the various sects in the colony, care is taken that no one be more highly favoured than another; all are placed on the same footing, and no deviation from the established rule is allowed to operate to the advantage or disadvantage of any creed claiming the aid of government. Everywhere are to be seen dispersed through the town, and especially in the vicinity of the river, numbers of awkward piles of brick and mortar, the purposes of which it would be difficult to divine, were not some clue afforded to the imagination by certain cranes and pulleys projecting from the ungainly fronts or gables they turn towards the street. These are the merchants' stores—a class of buildings peculiar to the colonies in Australia and America, and in the nature of their contents char-

acteristic of that state which a country presents in the first stages of its career.

Few are the necessities a store will not undertake to supply. Enter one of them, and without moving further than from one story to another, you will be enabled to furnish your house, your cellar, or wardrobe with every requisite: in one corner, your garden will find its seeds, and your farm will be provided with its implements from another; and, in short, nothing is absent that can command a sale, as the following advertisement bears witness:—

MESSRS. W. & G. STANWAY.

The following goods remain on sale:—

West India rum in puncheons.	} in or out of bond.
Brandy in quarter casks.	
Geneva in half cases.	
Taylor's stout.	
Dunbar's ale and porter in bottle.	
Port, sherry, Madeira, champagne, and claret, of the first quality, in bottle.	
Port, sherry, and Madeira, in quarter casks.	
Pit saws and files, percussion guns and caps.	
Scotch ploughs, with three shares, iron wire, sizes.	
Smiths' bellows, anvil, hammers, and vyce.	
Hand-mill for corn.	
Havanna cigars and negrohead tobacco.	
Bed-ticks, sofas, moreens, chintz furniture.	
Chair webb, cane-seated chairs.	
A four-wheeled phaeton and gent.'s cab.	

*February 23, 1842.*



It is worthy of notice, in connexion with the terms on which the preceding articles may be procured, that it is for the interest of the consumer to purchase by wholesale, even though his wants may stop far short of the quantities which it will thus be indispensable for him to carry away. By adopting this method, he will discover that, after allowing the merchant a reasonable profit, the instances are but few where the cost of an article rises materially above the price which it bears in England. Such instances, wherever they exist, will be found to arise from the situation of the colony, placed, as it is, in close dependence for the most of its supplies on so distant a source as the mother-country; the evil of which is, to cause a scarcity at one time, and a superabundance at another, accompanied, in consequence, with a rise or fall in prices. But the moment a commodity passes into the hands of the retailer, its price becomes enhanced to an exorbitant extent; for which no other excuse can be offered than the high rates of wages obtainable by subordinates and others, coupled with the enormous rents of shops, and, above all, a system of credit, up-

on which it may be affirmed, every monetary transaction in the colony is based. The immoderate lengths to which the latter system is carried are such, as to form a feature peculiar to the commercial world in Australia; so much so, in fact, as to render a ready-money purchaser nearly as great a rarity as a white swan on its lonely waters. From mercantile arrangements of magnitude, down to affairs of "low degree," it is the universal medium of payment: the householder discharges his quarterly accounts by a bill at three months' date; the attorney treats in the same way the accumulated fees of the barrister whom he retains; after the like fashion the landholder disposes of his property, taking payment in part on the purchase being closed, and the remainder by acceptances at distant dates. All classes are therefore engaged in maintaining this system of mutual accommodation, though all are not alike fortunate in escaping uninjured the convulsions with which experience has shown it to be attended whenever two or three individuals are no longer able to play the parts in it they were accustomed to fill. On these occasions, it must have occur-

red to many, that a less artificial state of things would give more stability to the community, as it would more independence to individual members ; but however desirable a change might be, as yet no one has had the courage to undertake the attempt ; nor is it likely that any one will, so long as by doing so he is liable to create a pressure on some particular point, the effects of which might possibly recoil on himself. At the same time, it is not to be disputed that the evil has been generated by the exigencies of the colony far more than by causes which fall within the power of its inhabitants to control. The primary cause resides in a great dearth of capital, coexistent with an unlimited scope for its employment ; and it is the attempt to supply the deficiency of the former that has raised up a substitute, which thus passes current among all parties, and will continue to circulate without a check so long as that deficiency exists to the extent it now does. The effect, therefore, of this scarcity of capital is, to cause a greater latitude in the obtaining and giving of credit than would be permitted in other communities ; and it is impossible to

deny, that unless this expedient had been hit upon, business in Melbourne would have been reduced to the narrowest limits, and the resources of the colony left comparatively untouched. To the enterprising colonist a thousand ways are open for advancing his fortunes, all of which would be closed to him were it not for the facilities which it affords. If a man of integrity and industry, he will be at no loss to find those who are willing to second his efforts. It is their interest to do so ; because, in no quarter of the world are instances more frequent where the holder of property *must* dispose of it in some shape or other, or otherwise be prepared for a serious loss. If it be his determination to sell on the terms of little or no accommodation, he will find himself without a purchaser ; and hence the necessity imposed on him of dealing with a liberality probably unknown elsewhere, and placing his chief trust for payment in the future. In so doing, there is, perhaps, less hazard than many would imagine ; for, to those who are acquainted with the vast profits which skill and labour succeed in realizing throughout the Australian colonies, it is a well-known

fact that they are often sufficient of themselves, in a short time, to raise up an amount of capital which, in this country, it would require the exertions of years to equal. Aware of this truth, the landholder, for instance, is the less reluctant to part with his property on conditions which, in effect, simply render the purchaser his debtor for four or five years to come. The presumption is, that before the expiry of that period, the property will be trebled in value, from improvements effected, the creation of new markets, and similar causes; and, by this consideration, the proprietor is induced to resign his rights with a confidence that, under other circumstances, would be fraught with dangerous consequences. As yet, all goes on smoothly with this mode of dealing, and, with some casual interruptions, it appears to have gained strength in proportion as the colony has advanced; but it would be premature to appeal to this fact in testimony of its merits: it yet remains to be seen what aspect they will present when a more sober state of progression shall succeed the "heady current" of prosperity by which the colony has hither-

to been carried along. In the meantime, its tendency, like that of all credit systems, is, to raise prices beyond their legitimate standard; and as the retailer stands in the same relation to the merchant that the farmer or purchaser of land does to the landholder, its influence extends over him even more sensibly than over the others, and contributes to affect all his operations. It, therefore, happens that, with the exception of the most common necessities of life, every article to be purchased in a shop is much dearer than in England. Beef and mutton are cheap enough, usually averaging about threepence per pound; bread is now sevenpence the loaf of four pounds. This, undoubtedly, is a very considerable reduction from its price during the early days of the colony, when, from the scarcity of flour, it was frequently sold at half-a-crown, or three shillings the loaf.

With respect to garden produce, the supply has hitherto been far from meeting the demand, and, in consequence, vegetables are both scarce and high-priced. As, however, the formation of a garden is the work of time, this was, in some measure, to be expected,

considering the recent date at which the spade was first applied to the soil, and the vast increase of the population during the same period. But great exertions are now making by the settlers in the vicinity of Melbourne to supply this deficiency. On the banks of the Yarra, many are the spots teeming with a fertility not to be exceeded anywhere; and such of them as have been converted into market gardens, are known to yield a return so ample in proportion to their extent and the labour expended on their cultivation, as literally to become mines of wealth to their proprietors. It is no exaggeration to say, that the owner of one of these gardens was, at my departure from the colony, realizing little short of five hundred a-year from a piece of ground of about three acres in extent; and this income, it must be borne in mind, was due to no superior skill on his part, but to the simple fact of his having been the first to embark in gardening as an occupation, and thus be enabled to bring his arrangements into active operation long before those of succeeding competitors had made any advance towards maturity. With scarcely any ex-

ception, every vegetable peculiar to the British isles is to be found on the table of the colonists; and in the rich soil usually selected for their growth, they attain a size rarely seen in the parent country, even under the most favourable circumstances. The potato, in particular, deserves to be mentioned, as rivaling the best to be procured at home; carrots and onions grow to an immense size; and of the many varieties of the melon tribe, that appear to flourish with scarcely any culture, I saw some specimens not to be surpassed by any ever reared in the south of Europe. Such fruits as are found in the temperate zone of the north, it is hardly necessary to remark, under the mild skies of Port Phillip thrive as well, perhaps better, than in their native soils. Of the pear, the fig, and the peach, there are some specimens in a garden near Melbourne, planted three years ago, that, for thickness of stem and abundance of fruit, might vie with trees of eight or ten years' growth in Great Britain. The vine succeeds admirably, shooting up freely and luxuriantly, and demanding so little attention to its cultivation, as to render it probable that, ere long,



the vineyards of the colony will be as extensive as those of Sydney, and that wine will be numbered among the riches of its territory. Greater care is requisite in rearing the orange, which it has been found necessary to shelter from the attacks of winter ; but I have little doubt that, so soon as the season of its early growth is past, it will demand no farther management to bring it to perfection, and, like the vine, will occupy a conspicuous place among the productions of the soil.

One of the heaviest items in the expenses of a colonist, arises from the exorbitance of house rents. With every allowance for the anxiety of a newly-landed family to obtain a home at any cost, they will often have occasion to pause ere acceding to the startling sums usually demanded for the occupation of a house, especially if it only be for a short period. For a small dwelling of four rooms, and a detached kitchen, it is no unusual thing to give eighty pounds a-year ; while houses with more ample accommodation, seldom fail to bring from two to three hundred pounds. Partly owing to this circumstance, and partly to the irresistible temptation to become a proprietor

rather than a tenant, no one, with means at his command, loses any time in building for himself a habitation of some description or other ; the luxury of living under one's own roof being deemed sufficient to outweigh every consideration of comfort and external appearance. Among the labouring classes, this feeling exists to an unusual extent ; judging from the multitude of cottages, or rather huts, which they have run up in the suburbs of the town, or wherever it was possible to purchase a few yards of ground. In not a few instances, it has led them to become the dupes of unprincipled individuals, who have felt no scruples in selling them land without a sufficient title—not unfrequently with no title at all ; and thus the purchaser, after expending his savings in rearing a home, finds, when too late, that all is the property of another, and that his labour and means have acquired for him nothing but a process of ejectment. This evil, however, has already begun to bring with it its own cure. It is now the fashion among the builders of such tenements to adopt the wise precaution of furnishing them with wheels ; so that, in the event of their right to the

locality being disputed, the house may be at liberty to take its departure, and seek another and less questionable site. Nevertheless, nothing seems to affect the incessant activity everywhere displayed in the construction of houses of this description, as well as others of a superior class ; and, indeed, if any proof were wanted of the flourishing condition of the colony, and of Melbourne in particular, it would be necessary only to point to the rapidity with which they are spreading themselves on all sides of the town. During the few months of my stay in Melbourne, more than a hundred of such dwellings had risen from the ground, all of which were inhabited immediately on completion ; while neither then, nor since, were any signs perceptible of the demand being in the slightest degree relaxed. It must, however, be added, that, from the high price of labour, as little employment was given to the workman in their construction as would suffice to render them barely habitable. From this circumstance, the apartments are reduced to limits, within which the occupant finds himself "cribbed, cabined, and confined," as uncomfortably as in a ship. Passages and lob-

bies are carefully avoided, as being of superfluous utility ; windows are made to serve the purposes of doors, and doors those of windows ; and, in fine, every appendage that could possibly be curtailed, is made to yield to motives of economy. There is, however, much of picturesque beauty in the aspect of these houses, as they are seen crowned by their low pavilion roofs, with dropping eaves, and resting in the shade of the broad verandahs which encircle their walls. The environs are full of them, occurring either in groups or singly ; and they abound especially in a large suburb called Newtown, now springing up to the eastward of the town, and long since the chosen resort of the principal inhabitants, whose residences are dispersed throughout the many lovely spots with which it abounds. Certainly nothing can be more romantic and secluded than the sites of many of their villas. Almost all of them stand in the shadow of giant forest trees, which here spread over the ground like the ornamental timber of a park ; the hollows and eminences by which the surface is broken, being alike clear of underwood, and of every object but the vast stems that

shoot up at irregular intervals from each other. The solitude, besides, is most profound ; and though Melbourne is only a short mile distant, so little of its noise is carried that way, that you might easily fancy yourself far away in the depths of the inland forest. But the greatest attraction is the green sward, that stretches up to every door, everywhere offering to the tread a short, firm carpet of verdure, a luxury of no small price to those whose daily labours lead them into the dust of the town. No greater annoyance can be conceived than this fine dust, clouds of which rise during high winds, of such volume and density as to darken the skies over the town, and for a time to envelop it in the gloom of a London fog. Some relief may be expected as soon as steps are taken to pave the streets, which yet remain but little removed from a state of nature. Hitherto no more has been done than to raise a footpath on each side, and, on some of the most frequented, to clear away the stumps and fallen trees that at one time stretched, in miniature barricades, from side to side, and still are seen on the outskirts and by-streets, lying where the axe has laid

them. But further than this, all is abandoned to neglect; the clay soil, with all its inequalities, forms the only pavement over which the gay equipages, seen rolling along, must pick their way amid the ruts and pitfalls that threaten to engulf them.

Of the public amusements which the town has to offer, it is enough to say, that far worse are sometimes seen in the best provincial towns in England; and, indeed, the style in which they are got up does infinite credit to the spirit and exertions of the originators, who have to contend with many disadvantages, neither felt nor known in this country. There is a race-week during the month of March, the course being situated in close proximity to the town; a theatre—the performances of which were at one time suppressed, owing to the disorders attending them, but are now revived under the superintendence of an amateur committee, who have engaged as respectable a company as could be secured in Australia. Besides these, there are quarterly assemblies, supported by the gay portion of the community; for Melbourne has its world of fashion as well as better

places ; while concerts and fancy balls, and other diversions, from time to time make their appearance. It is not long since the assemblies were instituted ; and as yet the bitter feuds of which they were the source have scarcely died away. It would appear that the leaders of fashion, to whom they owe their establishment, deemed the presence of certain classes, as well as certain individuals, altogether inconsistent with the dignity of a ball-room ; and, in consequence, the exclusion of such persons became a part of their plan. How this was effected, it is difficult to say ; nor is it very obvious how a line of distinction could be drawn among a community of traders, where all are, in fact, buyers and sellers, whatever be their pretensions, and therefore, to a great extent, on the same level ; but certain it is, that some mark of difference was discovered or invented, the effect of which went to place a number of very respectable inhabitants without the pale of fashionable life. It is needless to add, that the ire of the excluded was very great indeed, and gave rise to a war of recrimination, of which the newspapers were the field ; and although the spirit

in which it was conducted has abated much of its virulence, yet to this day the "dignity ball," as the first of these assemblies was termed, can never be referred to without stirring up a commotion worthy of a better cause. At the same time, I am far from undervaluing the merits of the society that exists at present in Melbourne. Though bounded by a narrow circle, it contains within itself most of the ingredients that constitute what is called good society in larger communities; and I doubt much whether, in respect to this point, it would be easy to furnish a parallel among localities less difficult of access. Of families possessing the advantages conferred by birth and education, the proportion is very decided; more so, perhaps, than is to be seen in the neighbouring colonies, with the exception of South Australia; and though some may attach but little weight to such a circumstance, I have no hesitation in ascribing to the influence which they exert, the prevalence of a more elevated tone of thinking and feeling than is generally found in that quarter of the globe. In particular, there is more than an ordinary abundance of young men of good



family, especially from Ireland and Scotland. Zealous as any in pushing their fortunes by every possible opportunity, to their credit be it said, they rarely forget the gentlemanly principles they have carried with them from home, however much they may be exposed to the practices of individuals of a less-elevated status, with whom they are necessarily brought into contact. As a class, they are distinguished not alone for a warm spirit of good fellowship, and the exercise of an unaffected hospitality that makes the stranger a welcome guest wherever he goes, but for what is not so usual—a strong feeling of unanimity as to whatever touches the welfare of their adopted land. Indeed, the latter quality has often led to the performance, on their part, of what may well be called acts of chivalry whenever the public interest was menaced, as it has been on several occasions. One instance of this I cannot forbear from mentioning, as having recently occurred, in which four gentlemen played a prominent part in capturing and handing over to justice an equal number of armed bushrangers. Hearing of the depredations they were committing,

this little party sallied forth in pursuit, and came up with them as they were seated at breakfast in a hut, the inmates of which they had surprised, and held as prisoners. A desperate skirmish instantly ensued, in which blood flowed freely on both sides ; two of the pursuers received severe gunshot wounds, without, however, quitting the field on that account ; while one of the marauders was shot dead, as he was fighting hand to hand with another of the party. The remaining three, who had barricaded themselves in the hut, seeing themselves outnumbered, and without a prospect of escape, surrendered without further resistance, and were conducted to Melbourne, where, a short time afterwards, they suffered the last penalties of the law. Prior to this instance, no attempt at bush-ranging had disturbed the peace of the colony since the period of its settlement ; and it will be long ere a repetition of such outrages be witnessed : in all probability, they would never have occurred, had the perpetrators been prepared for the promptitude and courage that thus brought their lives to a close, after a brief career of two days in the "bush." But one important

fact must not be omitted as bearing intimately on the social state of the colony, and that is, that at no time has it been a penal settlement. It is true some convicts have found their way thither, being brought over by settlers from Van Diemen's Land in the capacity of assigned servants, though not in numbers sufficient to assume the position of a class among the population, still less to influence the moral aspect of the community. Under present circumstances, therefore, the contamination which they are the means of communicating, is not likely to spread very widely; and so far fortunate the colony may be considered in having escaped the calamities with which a felon population repays its taskmasters for the compulsory labour exacted as a punishment. Had it been otherwise, and had Port Phillip become a receptacle for convicts, every friend to its prosperity must have deplored such a measure, as one which brought with it too many evils to counterbalance the relief it would have afforded from that dearth of labour that at one time pressed so heavily on its energies. It is not that the presence of such men renders life and property less

secure than they would otherwise be : on that score there is little to fear. The admirable police maintained in every part of the colonies where they are found ; the certainty of detection, the treachery of confederates, and, above all, the impossibility of escape, except it be to die in the woods ;—all these conspire to check their evil desires even more forcibly than at home ; and thus it is that the lonely settler, surrounded by men familiar all their days with crime, sleeps not less soundly than he who lives in the heart of a crowded city. But a degraded race cannot long exist in large masses in any community without vitiating the moral atmosphere, of which they are partakers ; and to this fact, as illustrated elsewhere by numberless examples, the state of the penal colonies forms no exception. There the outward presence of felony is, indeed, visible alone at the extremities of society ; but it is not to be denied that its taint has penetrated to the core ; that in spite of the barriers opposed by every natural prejudice, its influence has found a silent way to regions apparently beyond its reach, where, though disguised, its effects are yet to be traced ;

and it is not the least of its pernicious fruits, that the evil which it does lives after it. Long after the disappearance of every criminal from the district of his banishment, the vices and propensities which he has introduced and disseminated, will be found flourishing with a vigour but little diminished by his removal. These it will not be so easy to eradicate ; legislation will not restore an unsound, to a sound state of things, as readily as it can expel those who were the authors of the evil it condemns ; and therefore, all the amelioration that may take place in the habits and ideas of the once-convict settlements, must depend on the tendency of every social body, under wise laws, and freed from noxious influences, to throw off the impurities that have gathered around its frame. Such a process will, necessarily, be the work of time ; and, as yet, the first and most essential step,—the cessation of Australia being used as a prison for felons,—remains to be taken ; so that a long interval must elapse ere we shall behold it fairly in operation, and a still longer before it will produce a sensible change on the materials to be acted on. In the meantime, whether this

measure be adopted or not, many of its good effects will be anticipated by the importation of emigrants that has taken place during the last few years. While their arrival has dissipated many fears as to an insufficiency of labour, it is pleasing to think that the same means which have averted a pressing physical want, will go far to infuse a new life into the moral being of the community whose privations it relieved. Such an effect cannot fail to follow, when we consider that the fitness of the emigrants was previously tested, before leaving England, on the points most essential to the prosperity of the land that bade them welcome. In making a selection, it was not enough that they should be masters of the qualifications deemed most useful in a new country, but it was incumbent to add good conduct, industrious habits, and an orderly behaviour. As a body, therefore, they have given unmingled satisfaction wherever located; setting an example which may be slow of communicating itself to others: but that, sooner or later, it will exercise an influence, not only within their own sphere, but over every grade of their fellow-colonists, is what

no one will doubt who believes in the efficacy of good example, and the power of numbers acting in one direction, to produce an impression over a wide surface.

Limited as is its population, Melbourne already boasts of three newspapers, each of which is published twice a-week, besides a fourth that takes the shape of a weekly publication. Even when a mere collection of mud huts, tenanted by a few hundred inhabitants, it was supplied with a vehicle for news in the form of a manuscript paper, written and edited by one of the early settlers. There is, however, a considerable degree of talent displayed by the conductors of the Melbourne journals, and, in general, their columns are free from that tone of infamous personality that disgraces too many sections of the colonial press. But it must be admitted that colonial editors have some excuse, in the conduct and example of their fellow-colonists, who, as a whole, evince too decided a partiality for intruding themselves and their affairs on the notice of the public. Scarcely a week passes without some one, in this way, making known to the world his grievances, real or

imaginary. Let him be defrauded by a debtor who has absconded, — or, as it is called, “bolted,” — without paying; or be tricked in any purchase by a knave of sharper wits than his own, and forthwith he publishes his lamentations, mingled with anathemas, both loud and deep, against the author of them: or let it be whispered that an inn-keeper sells bad beer, or a physician exacts exorbitant fees, and, ere the secret is known to a dozen individuals, we find half a column of eloquence devoted to its refutation by the parties aggrieved. Nay, a constant reader will sometimes find the fair sex in the field, arguing stoutly in defence of their own or others’ rights; and truth compels me to say, that the specimens of their abilities that have come under my own observation display no less pertinacity than acuteness, and certainly far more *gentlemanly* feeling, so to speak, than nine-tenths of the similar productions that are due to the prevailing mania. According to the last census, the population of the province cannot be estimated at less than 20,000 souls, including that of Melbourne, which now amounts to 12,000 inhabitants. When we



consider that only seven years have rolled by since the foundations of this town were laid, and that before that time the land of which it is the capital was an unpeopled waste, we may well pause, and inquire whether this fact is not one of the most striking that modern times can produce. Nor let it be assumed that the arm of a great empire like that of England, all-powerful to create as well as to destroy, was the instrument that planted numbers, civilisation, and wealth, where desolation reigned before;—far from it. Of all the colonies which have arisen within a late period, this owes the least to the care of a parent-country. Neither projected nor watched over by a body of influential proprietors at home, it was, on the contrary, literally founded in stealth, and was left to struggle for existence as it best could; its success or failure involving the reputation of none but a few adventurers who hazarded their all on the issue of a doubtful experiment, and whose obscure doings it was worth no one's while to befriend. True it is, a short interval only elapsed before their efforts received the countenance and protection of the authorities; but

the assistance arrived when the crisis of their fate had passed by, and nothing remained to do but to take possession of a flourishing dependency. Since then, the colony has grown into the dimensions of a kingdom ; the straggling village is now a populous town, the inhabitant of which, as he treads the busy streets, and stands by its crowded port, may repeat to himself, not without feelings of proud satisfaction, the words of Sir George Gipps,—“ What has been done, has been done by ourselves ; it has been the work of our own resources, without calling for the expenditure of a shilling of outlay on the part of the British government, and without incurring one shilling of debt.”

## CHAPTER II.

Boundaries.—Geographical Features.—Rivers.—Mountain Chains.—Gipps' Land.—Harbours.—Towns.—Minerals.

FROM a territory embracing only a few square miles, the district of Port Phillip has rapidly extended its limits, until it now presses on the confines of other and once far-distant colonies. By the late act, conferring on it elective privileges, it is decreed, that "it shall be bounded to the north and north-east by a straight line, drawn from Cape Howe to the nearest source of the river Murray, and along the course of that river to the easterly boundary of the province of South Australia." A glance at the map will therefore show, that the province, thus defined, reposes upon the extreme southern coast of Australia,—that its position fixes it as the most southerly of all the colonies on the Australian continent,—and that the term South Australia, so far as it is ap-

plied exclusively to another colony, is a misnomer, the main body of that province lying in a line parallel with the northern boundaries of Port Phillip. In general terms it will be enough to state, that the colony stretches from the 141st to the 150th degrees of east longitude; that on the north it is bounded by the river Murray, which, rising on its eastern extremity in the 36th parallel of latitude, moves obliquely to the north, and quits the district in the 34th; and that, on the south, it owns a line of coast six hundred miles long, the most southerly point of which penetrates into latitude 39° south. About half-way between the limits that bound this shore on the east and west, stands the town of Melbourne; and, assuming this as a central point, its position, with regard to the capitals of the neighbouring colonies, is as follows:—West and north, about 500 miles, lies Adelaide, the capital of the province of South Australia; Sydney, on the other hand, is distant about 600 miles, in a north-easterly direction; while due south, appears the island of Van Diemen's Land, separated by a strait not more than 120 miles in width. Thus surrounded by

three of the most flourishing colonies in Australia, it is apparent that Port Phillip, from the circumstance of its position, enjoys an advantage in the way of intercolonial traffic, of which no one of its rivals can boast. With these it is enabled to keep up an easy intercourse, consequent upon the shortness of the voyages requisite; a privilege availed of to the utmost in respect to Van Diemen's Land, with which a close correspondence is constantly maintained.

It is to be regretted that no rivers, navigable to any extent, have been found opening a passage from the interior to the sea. The Glenelg, the only river of consequence in the whole territory, though rising too closely to the western verges to be of much general benefit, is, at the same time, rendered completely inefficient, by a bar which leaves only a foot or two of water at its mouth. Of all the other streams, whose waters descend to the coast, none are navigable except for a few miles before reaching the sea, and even then only for small craft. It is not difficult to assign a cause for so remarkable a feature. The whole of Australia hitherto discovered, and this por-

tion of it not excepted, is belted by a mountain chain, the crest of which runs parallel to the coast at various distances, but seldom receding farther inland than a hundred miles. Hence the rivers which rise on the seaward slope of this chain, have but a short course to run ere they mingle with the sea, and are, therefore, too sparingly supplied to expand into streams of much volume or depth. In this they differ materially from the rivers that take their source from the inner side of the same chain. These generally pursue a long and tortuous route into the interior, and, receiving many accessions by the way, swell into broad and majestic streams, and finally enter the sea at some point very remote from their springs. To the latter class belongs the Murray, which rises in the recesses of the Australian Alps, whose snowy ranges flank the colony on the east. Descending towards the west, it is joined by numerous tributaries, springing from different points of the same alpine steepes, among which the Goulburn and Ovens rank as the most important; thence, taking a broad sweep to the north-west, to meet the tribute of the Murrumbidgee

and the Darling, it rolls along, in a deep and ample current, between banks four hundred yards apart, and, passing beyond the western boundaries of the colony, turns towards the south, and pours an exhaustless tribute into a shallow lake communicating with the sea in the vicinity of Adelaide. Of the rivers which take a direct course for the shore, the Glenelg, the Barwon, the Yarra, and perhaps one or two others, are alone of any note. By far the largest of these is the Glenelg. To Major Mitchell we owe the discovery of this river, which rises in a mountainous range called the Grampians, and, following a southerly direction, empties itself into the sea, not far from the line that divides the colony from South Australia. In the upper part of its course it flows through a fertile valley, between precipitous banks of great beauty, and, lower down, approaches the sea through a country everywhere clothed with wood, except in the neighbourhood of the coast. At its mouth it is upwards of a hundred yards wide, with a depth of five fathoms inside the bar, which, as I have already mentioned, closes up the entrance as effectually as a flood-

gate, and reduces its usefulness as a navigable river to a very low ebb. Proceeding along the coast, to the eastward, we come to the Barwon, a stream of little volume, which passes by the town of Geelong, and falls into the sea near the entrance to Port Phillip bay. At the head of the bay, we find the Yarra; and, familiar as it is to every settler, its sources have never yet been clearly ascertained. Before reaching Melbourne, it receives the waters of many tributaries; and between that town and its mouth, unites with the Salt-water river in forming a deep channel, which, as has been already observed, is impeded by one of those bars, from which no river in Australia is wholly free. As high up as Melbourne, the scenery on its banks is tame and devoid of beauty; but above that point, it assumes a character so totally different from anything an old country can display, as to leave the most vivid impression on the memory. Indeed we may travel far before we behold what every step along its course discloses,—the rugged features of a new country brought into closest contact with the quiet look that accompanies the labours of agriculture. No-



where is this so striking as in the vicinity of Heidelberg, about seven miles from Melbourne. From any of the heights overlooking the river, you see it winding through a narrow valley of rich, alluvial soil, teeming with cultivation wherever the plough has drawn a furrow; on the slopes are dispersed houses and villas, surrounded with gardens and fences and all the comforts of an English home; but, wherever the axe is bid to pause, there the primæval forest rises to view, showing a front of dark foliage, which, as far as the horizon extends, wraps hill and valley in its gloom. Amid this boundless expanse of tree tops, you look in vain for crags and peaks to shoot up from the various mountain ranges that are seen in the distance. If there be any such, they are lost to sight among the unbroken wood that climbs their steepest acclivities, and shadows every summit no less than the plains at their feet. The Ovens and Goulburn have been already noticed among the rivers which flow towards the interior; besides these, the Loddon and Yarrayne, streams of third-rate importance, wind in the same direction; while, still further to the westward, the Wimmera

drains a large tract of country to the north of the Grampians and Pyrenees. Unlike the preceding rivers, which all hasten to swell the current of the Murray, the Wimmera discharges itself into an inland lake, the extent of which has not yet been accurately explored.

Three distinct mountain ranges may be traced among the numerous elevations scattered over the face of the country, either singly or in groups. The most western of these, called the Grampians, consists of three lofty chains, running in parallel lines north and south, the highest peak of which, Mount William, rises to the height of 4500 feet. More to the eastward come the Pyrenees, stretching also north and south, though at lower altitudes. Still further to the east, the Australian Alps tower to a great height, and cover the whole of the eastern frontier with their ramifications. The country, therefore, which they traverse, partakes of all the characteristics of a mountain district, being broken by numberless ridges into a series of broad valleys, down each of which a stream rushes impetuously to the sea. This the latest accession to the geography of the territory, is

due to the enterprise of Count Streleski, one of the many noble Poles who, for their attachment to freedom, now wander with a price upon their heads. Accompanied by Messrs Macarthur and Riley, he started from the remotest stations on the Sydney district; and, spite of hunger, toil, and privations in every form, succeeded in unmasking the hidden features of a country singularly wild and beautiful, but, at the same time, overspread with pastures of the richest growth. Among other achievements, the party scaled the highest pinnacles of a majestic peak, which they named Mount Kosciusko, and found to be 6500 feet in height,—skirted the shores of a lake, embedded among rocky crests, and known as Lake Omeo,—and traced the sources of many rivers, on whose banks, a long way to the westward, the flocks of the settler quench their thirst. Crossing finally the limits now assigned to the colony, they explored a tract “which,” says Count Streleski, “on account of its extensive riches as a pastoral country, its open forests, its inland navigation, rivers, timber, climate, proximity to the seacoast, probable outlets and more than probable boat and small-

craft harbours, its easy land communication, the neighbourhood of Corner Inlet and Western Port, the gradual elevation more hilly than mountainous, and finally, on account of the cheering prospects to future settlers which this country holds out and which it was my lot to discover, I took the liberty of naming, in honour of his Excellency the governor, Gipps' Land." Enthusiastic as are the terms which the narrator applies to his discoveries, subsequent experience has shown them to be neither unfounded nor exaggerated. Gipps' Land is now no longer the solitude which Count Strelleski was the first to penetrate. Wherever a way was to be found practicable for flocks and herds, it was seized upon by the settlers from the adjacent districts, who rivalled each other in pouring their riches through the opening and spreading them along the fertile valleys which he disclosed. In one respect this new discovery enjoys an advantage over the other portions of Australia, being blessed with a climate which the hilly nature of its surface and proximity to the coast renders more rainy than any to be found further north. From this reason, the droughts which from

time to time devastate the plains of Sydney, are here comparatively unknown, and produce no effect on the rivers with which the land is abundantly supplied. At Corner Inlet, a commodious harbour on the coast about 150 miles to the eastward of Melbourne, a township called Port Albert has already been formed, which now numbers more than 200 inhabitants, and is daily increasing in extent and population. A constant communication is kept up with Melbourne; and in short, this region so lately brought to light is rising fast in importance, and, in a shorter space of time than its discoverer ever contemplated, has, to a great extent, realized the flattering hopes excited by his masterly report of its capabilities and attractions. What these are may be best understood from the following rapid summary with which he closes his sketch of Gipps' Land. "That which, however, is already open to industry, ready to reward the toil and perseverance of the unwearied and greatly thriving settler of Australia, is the country itself, considered as an agricultural and pastoral one. Scarcely any spot I know, either within or without the boundaries of New South Wales,

on a large or small scale, can boast more advantages than Gipps' Land. On an extent of 5600 square miles, it has upwards of 250 miles of seacoast; two already known harbours, that of Corner Inlet, and Western Port, besides those for small craft, which, more than probably exist where her rivers disembogue; eight rivers, in addition to a navigable lake, and lagoons which bisect 100 miles of its length; 3600 square miles of forest, plain, and valleys, which in richness of soil, pasturage, and situation, cannot be surpassed; 2000 square miles of a coast range, with the most excellent quality of blue gum-tree, and black butt, embracing valleys large and deep, and holding out high expectations for the cattle-breeder. The most distant of its north-east points is but 120 miles to Corner Inlet, 160 to Western Port. One half of the communication for 70 miles requires only the construction of bridges across the rivers: the other half, across the hilly country to Western Port, through the ridges of which I wound my course, requires only the occasional clearing of the bogs, and in some parts the brush; which last, though exhausted during four weeks of

starvation, I was, however, able to break, bend, or open, to those more exhausted who followed me in the exploration. The natives, too, peaceable, inoffensive, scanty inhabitants of the lakes, who seemed, in my instance, as if for the first time they came across a white man, but easily tamed and secured by trifling articles,—far from presenting any apprehension or impediment to the undertaking, can be called in aid of a further and more minute examination of Gipps' Land."

It is to be regretted that the harbours and inlets with which the colony is provided are few in proportion to the extent of coast it commands. The principal of these is, indisputably, Port Phillip bay. At its northern or upper end, the shores contract into a recess called Hobson's bay; and this, into which the Yarra empties itself, is, properly speaking, the Port of Melbourne, and serves as the anchorage for such vessels as cannot ascend up to the town. About two years ago, while emigration was in its vigour, the bay presented an animated spectacle, arising from the constant arrival of emigrant vessels; so many as three or four sometimes dropping anchor in

one week. At that time more than a dozen large ships, or barques, might be counted within its limits, exclusive of an equal number of brigs and schooners which were enabled to pass up to the wharves on the river. Nearer the entrance to Port Phillip bay, and running deep into its western shore, is a well-sheltered inlet, which retains its native name of Geelong bay. On a high bank, facing an inner cove, is the site of a township of the same name, which, when I saw it, presented every indication of a thriving community. Houses and warehouses were rising on every side; ships were lying at anchor, waiting for cargoes; and drays, loaded with wool, were passing into the town as fast as the wearied bullocks could drag them. All these signs bespoke the rising fortunes of the place, which now numbers 900 inhabitants, and is, undoubtedly, destined to rank among the first-class towns in the colony,—a position it will ever maintain, on account of the safety and natural advantages of its harbour, and the riches of an extensive district to the westward, of which it will always be the most convenient emporium. As a town, its situation is healthy and



well-chosen ; and, besides boasting of a weekly newspaper and several hôtels, it is the residence of a police magistrate and an adequate custom-house establishment. To mark more sensibly the height to which it has advanced, the increasing communication with Melbourne has called into activity a steamer, which now plies regularly between the two towns, a distance of forty miles, and, as a speculation, has succeeded better than any other of its kind. Next in importance, as a township and harbour, comes Portland bay, a roadstead lying 150 miles to the westward of Melbourne. The bay possesses good anchorage in five or six fathoms water : though rather too open to the south-east to be perfectly safe at all seasons. The latter consideration, however, did not deter the Van Diemen's Land whalers from making it a favourite haunt ; and long before Melbourne arose, Portland bay was well known as a successful field for whale-fishing, and from this circumstance has derived, and still continues to derive, no small portion of its prosperity. In the vicinity of the town the land is described as being of the finest quality ; while inland extends a territory not

to be excelled by any pastoral district in Australia ; and so full of beauty, and so well-fitted to minister to the wants of man, as to extort from Major Mitchell the flattering appellation of Australia Felix. Its celebrity, in these respects, induced the inhabitants of South Australia to make strenuous efforts, in the hope of incorporating with their own province a range of pastures lying in such tantalizing proximity to their boundary line. Whether or not the question is set at rest, I have no means of knowing ; but it requires no hesitation to decide that, separated or not, the district in dispute is an integral portion of Australia Felix, and will ever look to Melbourne as the natural centre of its interests. This we are entitled to assume, not only because it is considerably nearer to Melbourne than to the other, but because the intervening space is an uninterrupted expanse of the finest pasturing grounds, in which no physical barrier exists to authorize a division ; while, on the side of Adelaide, a tract extends, comparatively barren and unpeopled, which, if placed between a capital and a populous district, such as that of Portland bay, would manifestly entail many

hardships on the latter. On the western side of the bay is situated the town, the population of which is computed at 400 inhabitants. It is also provided with its newspaper, like all the towns in the colonies, as soon as their population amounts to a few hundreds.

Western Port, situated about thirty miles to the eastward of Port Phillip bay, is a broad sheet of water, completely sheltered from every wind by an island that stretches across the entrance, and leaves only a channel at each end for shipping. Hitherto the settlers have shown no disposition to form a township on this spot, though all accounts represent it as a rich and well-watered country, and peculiarly adapted for agricultural operations. It is known, also, that coal exists in the neighbourhood, of good quality, and not far from the surface; and no doubt can be entertained, that so soon as a demand for this invaluable mineral renders the working of it worthy of attention, Western Port, as being the nearest point of shipping, will rise into a harbour of some note.

The mineral treasures of the country, although partially explored, include three of

the most useful allies of man : coal, iron, and limestone. Coal, as I have already observed, has been discovered in the neighbourhood of Western Port, not far from the sea ; and a company was formed for the purpose of working the seam, which was said to be of good quality and of easy access. The experiment, however, may be regarded as premature, so long as wood is so abundant as to be procured at present for little more than the cost of cutting and conveying it ; but it is evident that the supply from this source must, in process of time, reach its limit. Every year the axe is penetrating deeper into the forest, every advance adding to the expense of conveying the fallen timber ; so that it is probable that the day may arrive, perhaps sooner than is expected, when the produce of the mines may enter into a fairer competition than now with the logs of oak that enliven every hearth. In the vicinity of Geelong, indications of coal have likewise been observed ; and as these discoveries are the result of accident more than research, I have no doubt that its presence will be detected in other districts whenever they shall be visited by practical geologists.

Limestone occurs in many localities ; and at present is extensively quarried at Point Nepean, near the entrance to Port Phillip bay ; whence it is conveyed in small vessels to Melbourne. It is there largely used in building, for which its pure quality peculiarly fits it.

Both ironstone and sandstone are abundant ; the former is generally of the kind called kidney ironstone, while of the latter there are many quarries in the neighbourhood of Melbourne. Although of a very durable material, the expenses of quarrying and carriage have prevented it from coming into general use ; and hence the town has been entirely constructed from the brickfields which border the southern bank of the Yarra.

## CHAPTER III.

**Discovery of Port Phillip Bay.—Failure of Governor Collins to Colonize its Shores.—Overland Expedition of Messrs Hovell and Hume.—Settlement effected by Mr Batman.—Occupation by Government.—Difficulties of the Settlers.—Speculations in Land.**

It is only within the last few years, as most of my readers are aware, that the country thus described, has begun to occupy a share of public notice; but long before the emigrant embarked for its shores, various attempts had been made to transplant thither the elements of a new colony, all of them, unfortunately, without success. In particular the bay of Port Phillip became an object of attention. As soon as discovered, it was seen to possess, in its landlocked waters and opportune occurrence on a coast where such harbours are infrequent, the greatest of attractions to the merchant and navigator; and to this point, in consequence, were the efforts of col-

onization directed more than to any other, far or near, within the district. Our knowledge of its existence begins with its discovery by Lieutenant Murray of the "Lady Nelson," in pursuance of a series of exploring expeditions projected and carried into execution by Governor King, then supreme in New South Wales. The description by the discoverer, of that portion which he beheld, and especially of the southern shore, written as it is forty years ago, might, nevertheless, be copied by the traveller of to-day without a word of alteration, so exactly does it convey the principal features by which the surrounding locality is marked. "The southern shore of this noble harbour is bold, high land in general, and not clothed, as all the land of Western Port is, with thick brush, but with stout trees of various kinds; and in some places falls nothing short, in beauty and appearance, of Greenwich Park. Away to the eastward, at the distance of about twenty miles, the land is mountainous. There is one very high mountain, in particular, which, in the meantime, I named Arthur's Seat, from its resemblance to a mountain of that name a few miles from

Edinburgh." To this discovery the enterprising Flinders added an accurate survey; and it would appear that the bay, with its grassy shores and sheltered position, made a deep impression on the mind of that skilful navigator. On his return, the report which he brought back was so favourably received, as to induce government, two years subsequently, to choose it as the site for the establishment of a penal settlement. Accordingly, in the year 1804, Governor Collins landed with a large body of convicts under his charge, and with everything necessary for the formation of a colony. The spot, however, selected for that purpose, was unhappily the worst within a wide circuit: it was upon Point Nepean, the headland which, running out from the east, in that direction parts the bay from the sea. On further trial of the place nothing was found to counteract its many disadvantages as a port. Water could only be procured by digging wells in the sand; a source, however abundant at the time, far too limited to supply a growing population. The country in the immediate neighbourhood showed no prospect of being profitably culti-



vated; and, at the same time, no vigilance could prevent the convicts from making their escape to the woods. Satisfied, after a brief stay, that it was in vain to contend with these difficulties, Governor Collins abandoned his original purpose, and bade adieu to a country which, on experience, was found to belie the flattering hopes it had excited. He then set sail for Van Diemen's Land, and landing on the shores of one of the finest bays in the world, there laid the foundations of Hobart Town. For many years subsequent to this unsuccessful attempt to people the district, the tranquillity of its forests continued undisturbed by the step of a white man. Of the many exploring parties sent out by private individuals, as well as by the Government of New South Wales, none followed the road to Port Phillip, probably deterred by accounts of the unfavourable circumstances under which the first expedition quitted it. At length, in the year 1824, a small band led by Messrs Hovell and Hume, two influential settlers in the Sydney district, boldly threw themselves into the trackless wilds in their front, with the design of reaching the abandoned settlement

by land. Starting from Lake George, at that time the backwoods of Sydney, the party encountered a series of obstacles and privations, the recital of which gives one a good idea of the indomitable energy of these adventurers. "Their travelling equipage," writes Mr Arden, "at the commencement of their journey, consisted of two carts, containing supplies drawn by four bullocks; these were accompanied by six men armed each with a fowling-piece; the two horses ridden by themselves, with a spare horse, completed their outfit. Departing thence, (Lake George,) they left the last trace of civilisation behind, and entered at once into the wide expanse of an unknown interior, guided only by a small compass and the calculations made with an imperfect sextant. At the distance of eleven miles they met the Murrumbidgee. This stream, thirty or forty yards wide, presented in its swollen waters a bar to their further progress for the space of two days; after which, finding delay useless, they contrived, with much ingenuity, to form a punt out of the bottom of one of their carts: a tarpaulin drawn tightly round the bottom of the vehicle accomplished the desired end;

and they were enabled to transport their goods, dry and in safety. From this point a W.S.W. course was pursued for four days; when, from the mountainous character of the country before them, it was judged advisable to abandon the carts and such quantities of the provisions as could most easily be spared, concealing the same till their return. From this hastily-constructed depôt, they advanced for seventy miles over difficult ranges, precipitous ravines, and opposing streams, relieved at intervals by strips of lightly-wooded pastoral grounds, until they came suddenly and unexpectedly in view of a belt of stupendous mountains (the Australian Alps.) Here their course was necessarily altered a few points to the westward, to enable them to avoid the diverging branches of this enormous chain; and, after a journey of eighty-five miles, they discovered a river, (the Hume,) the breadth of which could not have been less than eighty yards. Two or three days were spent on the banks of this beautiful stream, in the endeavour to find a commodious crossing-place. Pursuing their course, they came, at the distance of thirty-four miles, to another, though

much smaller river; this they named the Ovens, crossing which, they altered the line of their route to a more southerly direction, to compensate for what had been lost in a westerly direction after meeting the Alpine ranges; and, at the distance of 109 miles in a direct south-west course, they met with and crossed a fourth river; the Hovell, (the Goulburn of Major Mitchell.) The region passed over, between these two last rivers, had presented a much more favourable aspect, having been often enriched with fertile plains, open forests, and numerous streams. The land contiguous to the Hovell, was found to be of a quality fitted for every purpose, pastoral and agricultural. The passage of this stream accomplished, Messrs Hovell and Hume continued their journey,—in a direction S.W., through an agreeable and picturesque country, the soil good, and grass abundant,—for eight days; when they were checked by the rugged, stony surface of a mountain they attempted to cross, and the dense, impenetrable nature of its brushwood and jungle-grass.” To this mountain they gave the name of Mount Disappointment; and, baffled in their attempts to find a breach

in the rocky rampart which it formed across their path, they turned upon their steps with the intention of passing round its flank. This they accomplished by making a long and tedious detour in a westerly direction; and then, once more resuming their proper course, finally received the reward of all their toils by descrying the sea in the distance. In thus bringing their attempts to a successful close, they had spent two months of hardships, of the severity of which none but those who enter these solitudes can form the slightest idea; and had travelled a distance of 378 miles, reckoning in a straight line from the point of their departure. From the natives with whom they came in contact, they learnt that the bay before them was called Geelong; and from this term, as well as from the names of other prominent features in the surrounding country, which the natives communicated to them and which remain unchanged at this day, we have little difficulty in determining, that the point where they struck the western coast of Australia was the bay of Port Phillip. The fact is worthy of note; because Messrs Hovell and Hume differed as to the precise

spot at which they reached the sea; the former supposing that they were on the shores of Western Port, a capacious harbour on the same coast, but some distance to the south, and eastward of Port Phillip bay. Subsequent researches, however, leave no doubt that this opinion was incorrect. Little time was spent in obtaining further knowledge regarding the country, for their provisions were nearly exhausted, while the rainy season was drawing nigh; and in two days, therefore, the travellers were on their march homewards, following the track which they had previously struck out.

Notwithstanding the abundance of rich pasturing grounds lying in the route of this expedition, and shown to be more frequent and valuable as it approached the sea, it is scarcely to be wondered at that the Sydney settlers should have taken no steps to make them their own. The road thus opened up was seen to be practicable for man, though at the cost of immense labour; but it was far otherwise with regard to sheep and cattle. No one at all acquainted with the difficulties of conveying these, especially in any numbers,

through a wooded and mountainous region, would willingly pursue a track beset with so many obstacles of that nature, as to involve the owners in an incessant struggle for the preservation and safety of their flocks. Fortunate would they be if, at the end of their journey, they did not find their charge reduced to one half of its original number, by the combined effects of a toilsome march, want of food, and the assaults of native dogs. Altogether, a track more exposed than this to disasters could not have been selected ; but it was the misfortune of Messrs Hovell and Hume to be guided only by their anxiety to take the shortest and most direct route, and not that which presented the fewest impediments. In pursuance, therefore, of that object, they entangled themselves, unconsciously, among the lofty lateral ranges which the Australian Alps throw off to the westward ; and hence their progress was proportionally slow and fatiguing. Times without number they had to climb, with weary steps, to the summit of a ridge, only to see "alps beyond alps" rising in the distance across their course ; while, on other occasions, broad streams, and dense jungles, opposed no less formidable difficulties to their advance.

In a manner thus cut off from every hope of being colonized through overland expeditions, Port Phillip ceased to attract the attention of adventurous settlers, and once more relapsed into its former obscurity. Years passed by, while no one was seen to intrude on the hunting-grounds of its savage inhabitants, although partially known to comprehend a territory of as fine pastoral qualities as any in Australia. But, during this period of oblivion, events were concurring to awaken a deeper interest in the forgotten district than any which these fruitless attempts had excited. The colonists of New South Wales, and Van Diemen's Land, had now left far behind them the narrow limits by which the infant efforts of their respective colonies were at first bounded, and were pressing on to spread their flocks over every vacant pasturage within reach. The effects of the unexampled rapidity with which this was done, began to be felt in the decreasing extent of land fit for occupation; and many of the more sagacious foresaw, that the time was not far distant when their resources from this quarter would be completely exhausted. In Van Diemen's Land, in particular, nearly all the



available land was in the hands of owners, or otherwise occupied ; and the peculiar nature of that island, of which a vast portion is an herbless waste, forbade the prospect of fresh fields being found, ready to receive their increasing flocks. To many, therefore, it became a serious question how to dispose of their accumulating stock ; and, with the conviction that they had reached the limits of fertility on their own shores, the necessity became every day more apparent of securing new tracts, whereon their future flocks might range at freedom. Thus circumstanced, a few enterprising gentlemen in the vicinity of Launceston, on the northern side of Van Diemen's Land, perceived the advantages of establishing a settlement on the opposite coast of Australia, as the surest and most effectual remedy to the evils with which they were threatened. The region they proposed to occupy was the district of Port Phillip. With this view they formed themselves into an association ; and in the month of May, 1835, despatched Mr Batman, as their agent, to open up a friendly intercourse with the aborigines ; and, if successful, to effect a purchase

of as much land as it was possible to procure. This scheme, owing to the judicious arrangements of the negotiator, was crowned with complete success. The native tribes, to whom the ownership of the soil was supposed to belong, for a most absurdly-inadequate compensation, willingly resigned every claim to a tract of country embracing an area of more than six hundred thousand acres.\* Thus far

\* The legal accuracy of the deed of assignment, of the beauties of which the natives must have been excellent judges, is well worth noticing. "Know all persons, that we three brothers, Jagajaga, Jagajaga, Jagajaga, being the principal chiefs, and also Cooloolock, Bungarie, Yanyan, Moowhip, Momarmalar, being the chiefs of a certain native tribe called Dutigallar, situate at or near Port Phillip, called by us, the above-mentioned chiefs, Iransnoo and Geelong, being possessed of the tract of land herein-mentioned, for, and in consideration of, 20 pairs of blankets, 30 knives, 12 tomahawks, 10 looking-glasses, 12 pairs of scissors, 50 handkerchiefs, 12 red shirts, 4 flannel jackets, 4 suits of clothes, and 50 pounds of flour, delivered to us by John Batman, Esq., do give, grant, &c., all that tract of country, about 100,000 acres, in consideration of the yearly tribute of 50 pairs of blankets, 50 knives, 50 tomahawks, 50 pairs of scissors, 50 looking-glasses, 20 suits of slops or clothing, and two tons of flour." The same royal brothers, in privy-council with Cooloolock, Bungarie, &c., alienated a portion of their crown lands to the amount of 500,000 acres, more or less, for 20 pairs of blankets, 30 tomahawks 100 knives, 30 pairs of scissors, 30 looking-glasses, 200 handkerchiefs, 100 pounds of flour, and 6 shirts; and a

all went well : but no sooner had the association applied to the authorities of Van Diemen's Land and Sydney for a confirmation of their title to the territory thus acquired, than the undertaking received a check at once fatal to its existence. Both governments refused to recognise the treaty, as being not only subversive of the sovereignty which the British crown asserted over the ceded territory, but as tending to create new and distant settlements, the formation of which it had long been the colonial policy to discourage. In this situation, no alternative remained to the association but to relinquish their claims as proprietors, and to sink down into the equally profitable, though less proud position of unlicensed squatters. Nor were their fellow-settlers in Van Diemen's Land less eager to push their fortunes in the land, as soon as the veil was drawn aside by which its real merits had hitherto been shrouded. Before the close of the year 1835, the first year of its existence,

yearly tribute, differing little in its items from the above, except in so far as it rectified the important mistake of proportioning six shirts to 200 handkerchiefs. The present value of the land, thus ceded, cannot be estimated at less than a million sterling.

the colony numbered a population of fifty souls; the live stock was estimated at one hundred head of cattle, and one thousand four hundred sheep; and the number of vessels entered inwards was eight. The following year opened with a stream of immigration from Van Diemen's Land,—rolling in so rapidly and continuously, as to distance every previous calculation. Before the month of June came on, the infant settlement had risen to the status of a village. Gardens had been formed, and about fifty acres of rich land made fit for tillage. The number of sheep amounted to upwards of twenty thousand, of which more than sixteen thousand had been imported during that half year. Of vessels, thirty-five had arrived, being principally employed in conveying the live stock from Van Diemen's Land. At the same time the population was augmented to upwards of two hundred individuals, and the country in the interior located to the distance of fifty miles. To the extraordinary numbers of sheep, and other stock, imported during this and the following year, we may trace the incredible rapidity with which the settlement shot upwards; and, in

truth, this fact reveals the grand cause of that uninterrupted career of prosperity which, ever since, has identified itself with the colony. Its founders, we ought to bear in mind, neither had to encounter the privations, nor to reap the late harvest of those who sow with scanty means. On the contrary, they carried with them not only their servants and food, all, in short, that was necessary to their existence; but, in the immense masses of sheep transported, they conveyed the elements of a wealth at once self-productive and boundless. Hence the settlement, from the first moments of its being, exhibited a spectacle to be found on the records of no other colony with which we are acquainted. Unlike their early struggles, it needed not to earn its daily bread with toil and suffering, waiting patiently till the year of recompense should arrive; but commenced at the outset, exporting largely its staple commodity, and drawing great profits by the transaction. Unquestionably, the easy and rapid communication with Van Diemen's Land was the source of this wonderful activity; and, in effect, the proximity of that island gave to Port Phillip all the advantages

of a mother-country. With a fair wind, a vessel may run over from Launceston to Port Phillip in twenty-four hours; thus placing the latter settlement in the light of a near province, to which every aid might be furnished as soon as demanded.

Up to this stage of its progress, the colony was without laws, or any provision for maintaining order among a population, the lower ranks of which were chiefly composed of convicts. The principal settlers, it is true, had framed for themselves a code of regulations, as a substitute for the authority of the law; but these they had no power to enforce, with regard to such members of their community as chose to set them at defiance; and thus their good effects were but partially felt. In this state matters continued, until the attention of the Sydney government was attracted to the rising importance of a settlement whose encroachments on their jurisdiction now became too serious to be overlooked. All that had been done hitherto by the settlers, and especially their occupation of land without a license, amounted to nothing less than an invasion of the crown territory, which it was in the power

of the authorities to resent ; and no doubt can be entertained, that a strict interpretation of their duty might have led them, if so disposed, to disperse the little band of intruders whose history we have been tracing. But, happily, a more liberal policy prevailed at Sydney. Satisfied that it was more prudent to lend, rather than refuse the support of government to those every way deserving of it, Sir Richard Bourke despatched a police magistrate, accompanied by a small surveying staff, to lay the foundations of a local government. To the personal exertions, no less than to the sound views of this enlightened governor, the colony owes a deep debt of gratitude. In person he proceeded to Port Phillip a few months subsequently ; and in May, 1837, laid out the plans of two towns, to which were given the names of Melbourne and Geelong. The wisdom of these measures was soon displayed in the accelerated progress with which the colony advanced, in consequence of their adoption. " Before the month of August, in the following year," writes Mr Arden, " so rapid had been its progress, as to render it impossible for the memory to keep pace with the move-

ment. Brick buildings were numerous; some boasting of two and even three storeys. The inns were transformed into handsome and convenient *hôtels*; and the lines of streets had been cleared, marked, and, in some places, were under a process of partial macadamization. Branches of two Sydney banks were in active operation, and the population had well-nigh quadrupled its former number. In the month of October following, the first newspaper was published in the town, under the title of the *Port Phillip Gazette*; of which the gentleman, whose accurate narrative we have quoted, was proprietor and editor. In the country no less activity was evident. To the distance of 120 miles in the interior, every pasture worth occupying was cropped by the flocks of settlers; and still no one paused before plunging deeper into regions still more remote. In spite of difficulties many and great, the settlers continued to push a-head,—difficulties not confined alone to the arduous nature of their pursuits, but arising, in many instances, from that great dearth of labour, which, as the colony increased, began to be felt with all its evils. Before long, the scarcity of servants prevailed



to such an extent as nearly to effect a revolution in the grades of society; the most extravagant wages were demanded; and their employers had no alternative but to comply with whatever was asked, or to remain without men to tend their sheep. From that time up to a late date, the usual wages of shepherds were from forty to fifty pounds per annum; in some instances more, together with rations on the most liberal scale; and exorbitant as this sum is for the labour of a single individual, it would have been cheerfully given, had not the helpless situation of the masters given rise to the most insolent demeanour on the part of their servants. As a specimen of their general conduct, I was informed by a gentleman, that during harvest-time his reapers refused to work, unless they received a guinea a-day: this he consented to give; in a short time they returned, demanding as much beer as they could drink, otherwise they threatened to throw down their sickles and quit the field. Rather than see his crop perishing, he submitted to the fresh extortion; and, in consequence, had the satisfaction of witnessing the men consume so

much liquor as to be rendered incapable of anything but lying on the ground and sleeping away the time which to him was so precious. To the same effect writes a lady who accompanied her husband up the bush in the beginning of 1839. "I felt distressed to see so much waste and extravagance amongst the servants. Many a large piece of mutton I have seen thrown from the hut-door, that might have served a large family for dinner; and, unfortunately, there is no remedy for this. If the masters were to take notice of it, it would only make them worse, or else they would run away, or, as they call it, *bolt*. I saw, plainly, that there would be neither comfort nor economy to the masters, so long as the country was so ill provided with servants. *They* were the masters; they had the impudence always to keep in their own hut the best pieces of the meat, and send in to their masters the inferior bits." Added to these, another evil existed of no slight magnitude. During this and the following year, provisions rose to an unprecedented price; flour, hitherto sold at £25 per ton, could not be obtained under £80 or £90; and tea and sugar ad-

vanced to proportionate prices. These three constitute the chief articles of consumption of the inland settler, being included in the rations furnished to his servants, and which he is bound to supply to them, at whatever cost to himself. Thus fettered, the settler would have waged a very unequal war with the difficulties of his position, had not the high profits he was deriving done much to replenish his resources and mitigate the pressure of the burden imposed on his efforts. For sheep a ready sale could always be commanded at thirty shillings or two guineas per head; while wool never brought less than two shillings per pound. Nevertheless the task was too severe for many to endure; and numbers of the less provident settlers are now feeling the bitter effects of that dear season.

In Melbourne, on the other hand, all who had any capital at command were under the influence of a novel state of things. Upon the completion of the requisite surveys, government threw open to purchase, by auction, the various allotments into which the town had been divided, together with a large portion of those on the outskirts. At the first sales,

the prices obtained were of moderate amount; but no sooner did an increasing population bespeak an improvement in the value of land, than capitalists turned to this as the most profitable field for speculation. The value of land, accordingly, rose to such a height as almost exceeds belief; and fortunate were they who had purchased early: for, amid the universal competition, they had no difficulty in selling their property trebled or quadrupled in price; and, in some instances, at a profit of a thousand per cent. At the time when the mania was at its highest pitch, one acre in the town was sold for a price that will ever make it memorable. Being situated in what was considered a very favourable site, it succeeded in realizing the prodigious sum of ten thousand pounds. It is to be observed, however, that this price was obtained by parcelling out the land into small sections; and for these, according to their advantages, from fifteen to thirty-two guineas per foot of frontage were given. But no spot in the town, however unsuitable, escaped the influence of the contagion; and many an unpromising locality obtained a price, for the half of which the

luckless purchaser would now be glad to dispose of it. In the same way the suburban allotments, or those in the immediate vicinity of the town, rose to an immoderate value; their prices generally ranging from £100 to £500 per acre. As may be anticipated, the frenzy did not last long: prices fell as suddenly as they had risen; and though some individuals, by lucky hits, had acquired large fortunes, many more, when their dream was over, found themselves possessors of land, purchased at visionary prices, for which they could procure no sale; and if any, only at a ruinous loss to themselves. Nor was this wild spirit of speculation confined alone to the town. Under the impression that sheep would still maintain their high value, many of the country settlers commenced purchasing large quantities, trusting to a further rise in price; of which they flattered themselves there could be no doubt, as every movement in that way had hitherto been on the ascending scale. In these schemes they were joined by many imitators among the young capitalists lately arrived, the most reflecting of whom could see no imprudence in becoming proprietors of

sheep,—a species of stock whose worth, it was manifest, unlike that of land, owed nothing to the imaginary prospects by which the latter maintained its status in the money market. Thus assured of prosperity, numbers entered into possession of sheep stations, which they had obtained after the fashion of the colony, by paying one half of the purchase-money at the time, and giving bills at a year's date, or a longer period, for the remainder. It was not long, however, before they were fated to be miserably disappointed in their expectations; for a decline took place in the value of their stock at once so sudden and overwhelming, as to leave the total amount of their property altogether unequal to meet their future engagements. Before the middle of 1840, sheep, which six months previously brought thirty shillings a-head, were easily to be obtained at one half of that price; and, as time passed on, sank to rates still more depreciated. As may be supposed, the consequences of this depreciation were such as to fall with most disastrous effects on those whose liabilities were incurred in anticipation of no reverse. Compelled, for the preservation of

their credit, to force a sale at all hazards, they pressed into the market, already glutted with stock of all descriptions, and thus served to precipitate their own downfall. After making every sacrifice, the result to many was irretrievable ruin; while numbers had to begin the world anew, with little more than the wreck of their former fortunes.

But while individuals suffered, and the reaction resulting from unmeasured speculation contributed to throw a gloom over the commercial circles, whose operations it continues to cloud even at the present moment, it is a remarkable fact, that the subsequent stagnation of trade seems to have been more superficial than real; or, at least, to have been so counterbalanced in other quarters as to leave the general prosperity unimpaired. If we turn to the custom-house returns, the usual standard by which the welfare of a country is tested, we perceive them furnishing no evidence of a pause in the career of the colony; nor even are symptoms to be detected indicating that the ratio of its progress was in any way affected by the depression of which all complained. This is borne out by the following statement,

to which I willingly refer the reader; not only because it corroborates my own impression regarding the transitory nature of that distress which, undoubtedly, existed for a time, but because I well know, that to those conversant with the methods by which a colony is lauded, mere personal experience such as mine, biassed, as it often is, by a leaning towards a locality where you have received much kindness, is far too vague and indefinite as an authority, unless supported by the impartial testimony of figures. In this instance, however, no language used by the well-wishers of Port Phillip can exceed in force the simple statement of facts I am about to present.

In the year 1837 the total receipts from customs amounted to £2979; in 1838 they rose to £6734; in 1839, to £11,475; in 1840, to £27,466; and in 1841, to £46,557. The returns for 1842 I have not yet received; but there is every reason to believe they do not fall short of those of 1841.

Turning, moreover, to the exports from the colony, we find them telling the same tale of triumphant progress. In 1837 the total value of exports amounted to £12,180; this rose in



1841, to nearly twelve times that sum: being for that year £139,135.

With regard to the customs, it thus appears that, in the year 1841, the proceeds were more than fifteen times greater than the amount derived from the same source four years previously,—the date first quoted being the year in which customs began to be levied in the district. A fact like this requires no comment. It proclaims more intelligibly than words how rapidly have been developed the colony's resources, and how abundant these are; for although a temporary impulse might have been communicated to the revenue by the introduction of capital at an early stage, something more is necessary to explain the multiplied ratio in which the former increased when that stimulus was no longer in operation. We need not search far to account for this. No one who has visited the colony, can hesitate to come to the conclusion, that the natural advantages by which it is blessed, have been, and will be the mainspring of its success. Gifted with pastures of illimitable expanse, it unites to these a tract of fertile land which, though of narrower extent, is

amply sufficient to maintain a dense population; while the benignity of the climate, marked by no extremes, and the mild influence of its seasons, conspire to favour, in an extraordinary degree, the growth and increase of the flocks which constitute its wealth. It is because these have multiplied beyond any known precedent, under the charm of circumstances so favourable, that the colony is enabled to display an augmentation of revenue equally unprecedented; and, in a word, for its prosperous career it is indebted to the bounties of nature, and to these alone, whatever may have been the efforts of man. The extraordinary increase of the flocks is fully demonstrated by the following table, which shows the amount of wool exported during the period from 1837 to 1841. In 1837, the exports were 175,081 lbs; in 1838, they advanced to 320,393 lbs; in 1839, to 615,605 lbs; in 1840, to 929,325 lbs; and in 1841, to 1,578,351 lbs. It will thus be seen that the exports in 1841 exceed by nine times those of the first year mentioned,—a rate of increase without a parallel in the annals of any colony in the same quarter of the globe.

In this brief sketch of the rise and progress

of the colony, I have stated that, at the close of 1835, the first year of its existence, the live stock amounted to one hundred head of cattle and one thousand four hundred sheep; the total amount in the colony may now be estimated at three thousand horses, sixty thousand cattle, and eight hundred thousand sheep; and it is more than probable that these are far below the real numbers.

## CHAPTER IV.

Government.—Separation Question.—Executive.—Laws.—  
Police.—Revenue.

As a dependency on New South Wales, the district of Port Phillip necessarily follows closely, in its institutions, the form of government enjoyed by the former colony. Up to the past year, the position in which it stood to the supreme authority at Sydney, was that of a humble province. Without a voice in the direction of affairs, everything relating to its interests, however trifling, was submitted to the judgment of a power, whose decisions, erroneous or not, carried with them the weight of commands to the subordinate government at Melbourne. How much discontent was awakened among the colonists by a system, the consequences of which too often involved them as sufferers, I have no wish to record ;

it is sufficient to state, that repeated grievances at length urged the most influential to form an association for the purpose of effecting the separation of the two colonies. In these views, they met with the support of the great body of their fellow-settlers; and measures were accordingly taken to bring the question before the British Parliament, with the object of rendering the colony dependent alone upon the government at home. It cannot be denied that the evils which provoked this step were many and great; but, it is to be doubted whether the scheme of the colonists for abating them, was not on the whole premature. The same end might have been achieved by demanding for their own government a more extended sphere of action over its own locality, by depriving the authorities at Sydney of that absolute control that regulated the minutest acts at Melbourne; and, above all, without separating the two provinces, to effect such a division in their revenues as to render it impossible for the one to apply to its own use the revenues of the other. All this may be effected, and that to the satisfaction of all parties, without entailing on the aggrieved

colony the expensive machinery of an independent establishment, which, though there is no colony better able to support, might be sooner spared than the numerous local improvements of which it stands in need. To some of the evils complained of, a remedy has, within a late date, been applied, by the remodelling of the legislative council at Sydney, to which Port Phillip now contributes six members. This undoubtedly is a concession of great moment, and not the less valuable that the colonists will now be provided with an organ through which their wants and wishes may become known; but, in the practical working of the privilege, it is easy to foresee, that it entails very great hardships on those whom they honour with their votes. In Port Phillip there is no class of men, as in Great Britain, wealthy, independent, exempt from an active management in their own affairs, and therefore ready to devote their time and abilities to the service of their fellow-citizens. As yet, few in this colony, perhaps I should say none, have risen to a position that places them beyond the necessity of personal exertions, or, at least, of exercising a superintendence as the

heads of establishments, either commercial or pastoral. For such men therefore to abandon the pursuits in which they are engaged, and to reside permanently at a spot, 600 miles distant from the scene of their business, necessarily implies a sacrifice of individual interests, which no country has a right to demand from its representatives. Men of prudence, it is evident, will be loath to continue long at their post in the council; for, however desirous of the dignity, they cannot long disregard such considerations as these: and we may rest assured, that until a new order of men arises, unfettered by their circumstances, and proof against all the disadvantages of the honour, the representation will be engrossed, either by political adventurers, or such as have little to lose; or by perpetual residents at Sydney, whose interest in the colony's welfare must be that of strangers. This is an evil that appears to have been overlooked by the framers of the late legislative scheme; and, in looking at the means by which it might be averted, it seems both fair and just that some provision should be attached to a seat in the legislature, so far as regards

Port Phillip; and both for the sake of those highly respectable gentlemen who are now aspirants for that position, and for the credit of the colony itself, it is a question well worthy of being agitated among its friends.

But the most obnoxious by far of all the grievances endured by the colonists has now been set at rest. The revenues of the two colonies no longer join in forming a general fund, but are kept distinct from each other; that which arises from taxation at Port Phillip being now declared inapplicable to the uses of Sydney. Before this change took place, the younger colony was placed in a situation of extreme hardship. In want of numerous local improvements—such as bridges, roads, public edifices, harbours, and especially labour, it saw the proceeds of its land sales, by which all these wants might have been supplied, systematically diverted into the treasury at Sydney, and the greater portion of them absorbed in the support of that district. As one instance alone, the enormous sum of 300,000 pounds was raised from the sale of crown lands during the years 1840 and 1841. Of this, scarcely one half was devoted to the introduc-



tion of emigrants into the colony ; the remainder being intercepted by the government of Sydney, for the furtherance of emigration to its own shores, and for the promotion of its own public works ; while it permitted Melbourne to grow up into a town without a court-house, or government offices, without jails of an efficient description, or even a bridge over the river by which it is divided in two. Apart from the glaring injustice of this procedure, it fell with peculiar weight on the colonists, whose efforts it not only served to cramp, but the abstraction of so much capital to a spot from whence it never returned, acted like a drain upon their resources, which all their industry and exertions were scarcely able to sustain. Of all the obstacles to the advancement of the colony, none, I am persuaded, has exercised so baneful an influence as this ; and, had not a timely check been put to it by the present administration, to whom belongs the credit of the step, it is no exaggeration to assert, that the career of the colony would have been seriously endangered. The executive at Melbourne consists of a Deputy-governor, or Superintendant, as he is

styled, and a few officials connected with the various branches of the customs and treasury. From the day of his appointment, the conduct of the superintendant, Mr Latrobe, has been such as to elicit unmingled satisfaction from all classes of colonists; and that he has "no enemy in the colony," as he himself declared on a public occasion, is the natural result of that judgment and urbanity with which he has discharged duties of a very invidious description. To make such a boast, falls to the lot of few men who have moved much among the jarring interests by which the colony is agitated; and I do not go far wrong in saying, that probably no other man, unquestionably no other functionary, could have given utterance to so proud a declaration.

The judicial department is composed of a judge, a crown prosecutor, whose office is similar to that of an Attorney-general, and a few other officers of the court. For the benefit of Scotch readers it may be necessary to state, that the laws in use are those of England, modified, however, by the changes requisite in adapting them to the colonies. Besides these, many local enactments are in force,

arising out of the peculiar state of things presented by a country in the early stages of its existence. For all minor offences against the peace, there are police magistrates stationed in the various districts into which the colony is divided, and who are empowered to punish offenders in a summary way. Under their control is placed a constabulary force, generally attached to the towns within their respective jurisdictions; while another body, termed the mounted police, is entrusted with the duty of patrolling the roads, and maintaining order throughout the interior. In addition, a third force, termed the Border Police, as its name implies, affords protection to the settlers on the furthest verges of location, and constitutes a very valuable auxiliary to those who, from their remote and isolated positions, could place no certain dependence on the aid of the law. For the support of the latter body, a small tax is levied upon the settlers, according to the amount of stock each possesses; and the command is vested in the commissioners of crown lands. It is customary, likewise, to select the most influential among the settlers, and appoint them to act

as Justices of Peace. It is, however, to be regretted that in many instances the latter dignity has been conferred on those whose respectability is beyond doubt, but whose previous occupations had fitted them to be better judges of cattle or goods, or any other subject than the intricacies of the law. Hence occasions arise, when, either from ignorance or incapacity, they mistake the extent of their own powers, and violate the simplest rules of justice. One of the latest instances of this kind occurred during a race day at Melbourne, when a Justice of the Peace ordered a gentleman to be chained by the leg to a tree; in which position he was exposed for some time to the fiery rays of the sun, the thermometer out of the shade standing at 135. On investigation, it appeared that the sole offence of the maltreated prisoner amounted to no more than crying "Shame!" on witnessing an offender subjected to the same harsh usage: for using this exclamation, he was instantly apprehended, and dealt with in the manner I have related.

With regard to Melbourne, the internal management of its affairs is vested in a cor-

poration which includes the usual accompaniments of a mayor, aldermen, and councillors: in this respect, it stands alone among the other towns in the province, whose population is yet far too scanty to demand the cares of a civic council.

The revenue is classed under two heads, ordinary and extraordinary. The ordinary revenue embraces all taxes levied in the colony, whether arising from the customs or from any other source, and the funds thus derived are applied to the usual purposes of government. In regard to the customs, the duties, as appears by the following list, are very moderate in their amount.

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| 1. Upon Spirits, the produce of the United Kingdom or its colonies, imported directly, per gallon, | s. d. |
|  | . 9 0 |
| 2. All other imported Spirits, ditto,  | 12 0  |
| 3. Wine, five per cent. <i>ad valorem</i> .  |       |
| 4. Tea and Sugar, five per cent. <i>ad valorem</i> .   |       |
| 5. Flour, Meal, Wheat, Rice, and other grain, five per cent. <i>ad valorem</i> .                   |       |
| 6. Tobacco and Snuff manufactured, per lb,   | 2 0   |
| Ditto. ditto. unmanufactured,  | 1 6   |
| 7. Goods not being the produce of the United Kingdom, 10 per cent. <i>ad valorem</i> .             |       |

The extraordinary revenue, on the other hand, is obtained from the sale of crown

lands; and by the latest regulations from the Colonial office, one half of the proceeds of these sales is devoted to the encouragement of emigration, while the remainder is to be applied to the promotion of works of public utility. Upon this fund are chargeable the expenses of the survey department, and the maintenance of the aborgines, both of which form serious items in the expenditure of the colony. The sums realized each year vary, of course, with the quantity of land sold; and no calculations can be framed as to the average produce of this branch, the results of the three last years' sales having differed from each other so widely as to forbid an accurate estimate of the income to be obtained under this head.

## CHAPTER V.

Purchase of Land.—Government Sales.—Quality of the Soil.—  
Water-Frontage.—Water-Holes.—Clearing and Fencing.—  
Bullock Teams.—Climate.—Hot Winds.—Open Aspect of the  
Country.—A Scrub.—Trees.—Bush-Fires.—Little Damage  
done by them.—Precautions.

THE capitalist who arrives in the colony with the determination of becoming a landed proprietor, need not search far in order to gratify his tastes. Both in the vicinity of Melbourne and the other towns in the colony, as well as in remoter situations, there is no want of excellent land fit for tillage; and the only subject, therefore, for his consideration, will be the terms on which it is offered. It is at his option, either to purchase from private parties, or to wait until the periodical land sales, conducted by Government, bring into the market a variety of allotments, his choice of which he is thus enabled to secure by a direct purchase from the crown, freed from the

enhanced price which the speculator, or previous holder, demands for property acquired in a similiar way, and which it is his object to resell at the highest possible rate. Of such sales, due notice is always given in the public journals, together with such a description of the land thrown open for selection, its boundaries, extent, and other features, as to remove every difficulty in the way of ascertaining, by personal inspection, whether it is conformable to one's wishes. The plan of selling by auction is that in use, and has once more superseded the uniform-price system, by which it was supplanted for a time; and, much to the satisfaction of every colonist, all lands are now disposed of by the former method, no reservation being made in favour of special surveys, which are therefore no longer to be obtained. As soon as the hammer falls, the regulations require the purchaser to make a deposit of ten per cent. on the purchase-money, and to liquidate the residue before the expiry of a month. If this be not done within that period, the deposit is forfeited, and the property may again be exposed for sale. Those lands, however, that remain unsold at the conclusion of a



government sale, may be obtained at the upset price at which they were exposed any time previous to the next sale appointed to take place. In no other way than by purchase can lands be procured, all grants from the crown being now abolished; but officers of the army, navy, and East India Company's service are entitled to a remission of purchase-money, the amount of which depends on the rank they hold.

Supposing, however, that an intending purchaser is master only of a moderate capital, he will probably find it the wisest plan to purchase from those who are already proprietors; for, although it will be necessary, in that case, to pay a higher price, this disadvantage is in a great measure counterbalanced by the conditions of payment, which are, in general, of so liberal a nature as to fall very lightly on the efforts of an industrious settler. The government, on the other hand, is a ready-money dealer, perhaps the only one in the colonies; and therefore not the most favourable to the limited capitalist, who, as has often happened, allured by a tempting opportunity, unguardedly exhausts all his capital in the

purchase of land, without reserving a provision for the necessary improvements, without which it is comparatively valueless. Added to this, the allotments are seldom of dimensions proportionate to the wishes of the prudent; to whom, indeed, they are unattainable, unless prepared to purchase an estate when in want only of a farm. Thus, out of three hundred and eighty-six allotments, exposed for sale during the year 1841, it appears that ten alone fell below two hundred acres in extent, the remainder averaging about eight hundred acres each allotment; the value of one of which, if estimated only at the upset price of one pound per acre, amounts, nevertheless, to a sum that places it beyond the reach of any but the monied speculator. It will, therefore, I repeat, be more advantageous for the settler on a small scale to conclude a purchase with some landholder; and, as the newspapers teem with advertisements of land for sale, he will be at no loss in making a selection from land, either wholly or partially improved, or, if he prefers it, from that which still awaits the approach of the axe or plough. Of the latter description, there is still an abundance to be

met with in the vicinity of Melbourne, notwithstanding the broad area of cleared land by which it is begirt, and to which cultivation is daily adding its tribute. Doubtless the prices will appear startling to the inquirer, especially for land as yet in a rude state; but a little experience will convince him that there is less foundation for deeming them exorbitant than seems reasonable at first sight, and that they are no more than commensurate with the high profits by which the soil repays the labours of its cultivator. Thus, it may be assumed, that within the five-mile boundary around Melbourne, no unimproved land of fair quality is to be purchased under ten pounds per acre; and this is, perhaps, below the real current price. Even beyond that line, the fertile land shows no tendency to become less costly, nor is it until we reach a distance of twelve or fifteen miles from town, that we find a sensible diminution in its value.

The soil, wherever brought under culture, has shown a degree of fertility, exceeded by no other land in the same region of the world. It is proper, however, to remark, that hitherto the plough has been applied to no land save

such as gave the promise of abundant harvests; for the expenses of clearing and fencing have been, and still are, too heavy to be laid out on any but of the best description; and, therefore, such as is now under tillage cannot fairly be taken as a sample of fertility throughout the colony. On the banks of the rivers are to be seen alluvial flats of extraordinary richness, that only require to be cleared of the timber with which they are heavily cumbered, to produce the finest crops of grain. Besides these, there are wide plains, evidently the beds of lakes at a former period, of a nature equally rich; and, on some upland districts, I have seen many square miles of deep black loam, thinly wooded, and fit for every agricultural purpose. On the whole, though the proportion which the fertile land bears to the ordinary is comparatively small, it is, at the same time, abundantly manifest, that there is enough, and more than enough, to supply with food a population far more dense than the district of Port Phillip will ever be called upon to maintain. On this subject, however, the testimony of a practical agriculturist will be read with interest; and I shall, therefore, con-

tent myself with quoting the words of the Rev. Mr Belden, whose experience in colonial husbandry is of some years' standing. The occasion on which they were spoken was at a dinner given by the colonists to Sir George Gipps, the governor of New South Wales, who was then paying a visit to Port Phillip, which, it is unnecessary to add, is a dependency of the former colony. "His Excellency has already expressed his surprise at the extent to which cultivation has been carried in the more immediate vicinity of the town, and of the beauty of the crops which he has already seen during his short visit amongst us; but I could show his Excellency vast tracts of land in this district, wonderfully adapted for every purpose of agriculture, and capable of maintaining many hundred times our present population: not only large flats on the banks of rivers, but thousands of acres of rich alluvial soil, apparently the deposit of inland lakes, which have taken a long series of years to arrive at their present perfection. I could have shown his Excellency last year,—a year in which the colony suffered much from the severity of the drought,—I could have shown him crops of

corn which far exceeded in produce per acre, and quality of grain, anything of the kind I ever saw at home,—surpassing, by nearly twenty bushels per acre, any crop ever grown at home; and exceeding, by four or five pounds per bushel, any sample of prize grain ever exhibited in England.” The speaker then adverts to a suggestion full of deep interest to every colonist, because it opens up a source of prosperity previously unknown, and one which, if properly conducted, might aid materially in swelling the fortunes of the colony. “There is one part of the subject which I should not have alluded to, had it not been for the remarks of the previous speakers, who appear to consider wool as almost the only exportable commodity of this colony. It is well known that cattle thrive here in a most remarkable manner; and many of you are aware that I have procured the returns at which beef has been supplied at home to the English navy and the East India Company for many years. I consider that we may supply them with salt provisions thirty or forty per cent. cheaper than the rate at which they have hitherto received them. In fact, no

country in the world is capable of producing beef at so cheap a rate as this colony; for, in all countries nearer the tropics, their food is destroyed in the summer season; and in colder latitudes it requires artificial means to produce fat beef in winter. But here our cattle are fat and thriving all the year round; and, although I have been in the habit of attending the Smithfield shows for many years, I never saw beasts there exhibited fatter than what I have seen produced on the natural herbage of this country. Take, therefore, the open and drier plains for the production of fine wool, which this climate produces in such perfection. Let the moister and more thinly-wooded districts be appropriated to the growth of cattle for supplying the British navy and various parts of the world with salt provisions; and let the rich alluvial flats be taken for the purposes of agriculture, capable of growing food in the utmost abundance for many hundred times our present population."

But, in Australia, a fertile soil is not, as elsewhere, the sole test by which a landed property is valued. Perhaps a more paramount consideration than any is the fact of

its enjoying a copious supply of water, summer as well as winter. No land, indeed, is ever offered to the public, either by government or private individuals, that does not display its extent of "water-frontage;" because, wanting that essential point, no one would ever think of looking at it: but the inquirer must satisfy himself by personal observation as to the whole truth of such statements. It is very possible a water-course may be pointed out, whose channel, during the winter months, exhibits no lack of water, and not unfrequently supplies more than is desirable, being then too limited for the swollen torrent that fills it; but when the last drop of rain has fallen we see no more of the water-frontage; and, till winter again comes round, all that remains is a stony hollow, to which the flocks may repair in vain to slake their thirst. But instances of this kind are not often met with; for however deserted by its current, it is rare to find the channel of one of these streams without some portion of its contents remaining in those deep pools of water that occur at greater or less intervals in its course, and in colonial phrase are termed "water-holes." That these



water-holes form one of the most extraordinary features of this new world must, I think, be the impression of every stranger. Often in taking my course along the grassy bed of what in winter is a running stream of no great depth, I have come upon a natural basin of water, deep and clear, and in a situation where no winding or abrupt declivity might show it to be the effect of an eddy in the current. This is a water-hole; and many of them attain the size of ponds, the contents of which seldom become stagnant, while the depth ranges from ten to twenty feet and diminishes but little during the summer. Not a few are so regularly shaped as to appear the work of art, their margin forming a complete circle, at the brim of which you find the water as deep as in the centre. To what they owe their origin it is difficult to conjecture: it is probable their formation may be traced to the unseen springs, by which they are fed, whose feeble efforts, during the course of ages, may have scooped out cavities such as these from the soil around them. But however mysteriously excavated and supplied, we cannot fail to arrive at the conclusion, that they consti-

tute a wonderful provision for retaining an element, the want of which would render large tracts of great fruitfulness, and now abounding in flocks and herds, as devoid of life as a desert. Provided, therefore, that a few water-holes remain, and at moderate distances from each other, it is considered no material disadvantage to the land on its banks should the stream itself disappear during the dry season and leave nought but these for the sustenance of the vicinity. In some districts, however, where a long continuance of drought has taken place, implicit dependence cannot always be placed on this source, as the water then suffers from admixture with the mineral substances with which the surrounding soil may be charged; and thus it sometimes happens, that the wayfarer finds mere alum or salt in his draught from the pool than is altogether agreeable to the palate. But as a matter of course no blessing is so highly prized as an ever-flowing stream, and greatly favoured is the tract through which it pursues its way: for there the flocks require not to be driven a long journey to water, as often happens when water-holes are few and at considerable dis-

tances from each other. There is, in consequence, every disposition to make the most of such a stream; and wherever the land on its banks is surveyed for the purpose of location, an inconsiderable extent of water-frontage is deemed quite sufficient for a long stretch of back ground. For this reason the territory adjoining the Yarra, especially that portion of it in the vicinity of Melbourne, presents a very singular appearance. On looking at the map of the district, you see the land, with but few exceptions, cut up into long narrow strips, which resemble so many ribbands placed side by side, with one end resting on the river and the other terminating at a long distance from its banks.

As soon as the axe has cleared a way for the plough, the culture of the soil becomes an easy task to the husbandman, whose labours may be said to have nigh terminated with that operation. But to do this thoroughly and well he must prepare himself to encounter an undertaking of no slight difficulty and toil, particularly if his location be situated on an alluvial flat, the favourite haunt of the Eucalyptus tribes, and where they will meet him

with stems of giant growth in token of the richness of the soil that lies beneath. The removal of these by the ordinary processes of holing, burning, and grubbing, can only be effected by days of incessant labour; it consists in rooting up each tree, sawing it into lengths as it lies on the ground, piling the whole into heaps, for which the services of a bullock team are necessary; and then setting fire to the timber and keeping up a blaze till the ashes alone remain. Hence, from the arduous nature of the work, little progress is made at a time; and the generality of settlers, or at least of those who trust to their own efforts, are content with clearing a few acres each season, and proceeding in this way until the surface of their land is finally laid bare. Where greater expedition becomes an object, it is then usual to have the clearing performed by contract, the cost of which necessarily depends on the description of timber to be felled, and the abundance in which it occurs; but when the forest presents no exception to its ordinary openness, the expense of "holing and grubbing" may be estimated on an average to amount to five pounds per acre.

Whatever space may be cleared, the settler, for his own sake, will lose no time in surrounding with a fence before the crops begin to shoot up from the ground. This is almost invariably done by contract, the contractor generally furnishing the materials, for which, and his labour, he is paid at the rate of seven shillings a rod. The fence most in use is that called "post and rail," stout and durable in its nature, usually about five feet high, and is framed of such proportions and solidity, in order to baffle the cattle and horses that roam unrestrained by obstacles less formidable. With regard to boundary fences the colonial laws enforce several equitable provisions. The owner or purchaser of a tract may require the possessor of the lands adjoining to assist in making or repairing the fences between their respective properties. If the notice given be not attended to within the subsequent six months, the former is empowered to complete the fence at his own cost ; cutting wood, if he requires it, on the land of the other, from whom he is entitled to recover, in a court of law, one half of the expense incurred. Those, also, who enclose their property, before the lands im-

mediately adjoining shall be held by private individuals, are entitled to claim from the future proprietor of such lands one half of the value of the dividing fence; for the recovery of which he is likewise authorized to institute legal proceedings.

By the British agriculturist little is to be learnt before commencing operations as a colonial farmer. His previous stock of knowledge will be found as applicable here as at home; nor will it be necessary for him to vary his accustomed routine of operations, except, perhaps, by the more exclusive cultivation of certain crops, to meet a more heightened temperature than has ever blessed his labours in his native land. It is not expected that his fields should display the trimness and neatness of finish that constitutes the pride of an East Lothian farmer; this is an object placed beyond his attainment by the scarcity and high price of labour, from the insufficiency of which his wishes must be limited to the mere cultivation of the soil, which, if wrought so as to produce a fair crop, is all that he ventures to hope for. Some time will be necessary to become reconciled to the use of

bullocks in the multifarious capacities to which the practice of the colony devotes them, and whose assistance, as animals of draught, will be new to the experience of English and Scotch tillers of the soil. From the tardiness of their movements, combined with the small amount of work performed, they impart a double portion of tedium to the labours of the husbandman, and certainly appear to great disadvantage in contrast with the superior activity of horses ; but this slowness, although sufficiently annoying, is more than compensated by the superior steadiness of their draught ; and, but for the weight of their numbers acting in concert, it is doubtful whether any other power could enable the colonist to overcome the resistance offered to the plough in breaking up the virgin soil ; at all events, it would be impossible by any other means to convey a load along the rugged tracks that serve as the only lines of communication, abounding, as these do, with the unremoved impediments of the wilderness : deep gullies, treacherous swamps, precipitous ascents, and bridgeless rivers. It is in meeting these obstacles that their utility becomes most obvious. However deep the dray may be

embedded in mud, or perilous the declivity up the face of which it is toiling, the driver has no fear for the result. Inch by inch it is dragged forward, the chain so stiff as to resemble a bar of polished steel, while the team never for a moment relaxes from a uniform strain that fails not, though by slow degrees, to force a way against all opposition. In such situations, the strength of horses would be speedily exhausted by their own struggles, which, so far from being useful, would tend rather to endanger themselves and the vehicle. The introduction of draught-horses would, however, be highly desirable in those spots in which cultivation has been established long enough to smooth down the asperities of cleared land ; and, in some instances, this has been done wherever the settler was able to afford the high price that animals of this class command. But the latter circumstance has hitherto proved a bar to their more general use, especially on a farm ; and no greater boon could be conferred on the colony than the importation of a few of the best breeds from the mother country. Horses of this description average about sixty pounds



in price ; while a pair of working-bullocks may be purchased for ten or fifteen pounds, according to their merits.

All that has been said regarding the benignity of the climate is well worthy of belief ; and, indeed, no words can sufficiently extol that peculiar softness that blends itself with every season, and reigns undisturbed all the year round, except during those brief intervals when summer and winter are in their ascendant. To the tiller of the soil, this unvarying mildness becomes a staunch and true friend : tantalized as his hopes have often been by the waywardness of his native skies, they run no risk here from the untimely frosts, the bleak winds, and other sources of dread, that render the period between seed-time and harvest one of harassing anxiety. By its geographical position, the colony is happily exempted from all these scourges of our northern clime ; stretching from the 35th to the 39th degrees of south latitude, it enjoys to the full the same tempered rays that fall on the corresponding latitudes of the Northern Hemisphere, a region, which a glance at the map

points out as embracing the fairest portion of Europe, emphatically

“the land of the cedar and vine,  
Where the flowers ever blossom, the beams ever shine.”

It has been elsewhere said, that there is a striking resemblance between the temperature of this portion of Australia and that of Lisbon; and, from my own experience, I have no hesitation in confirming this statement so far as their general features are concerned. But, in one point, the climate of these southern parallels admits of no rivalry: and this it is that constitutes its greatest charm. It is inexpressibly dry and pure; so wholly untainted by moisture, that it is rare to see rust making its appearance, except during the rainy season; and still more rare, save during the same period, to behold the heavens dimmed by fogs or exhalations. Hence, though the mercury at times rises very high, occasionally to the temperature that prevails at Calcutta, the same degree of heat that in a humid climate would be intolerable and noxious to life, is here found to produce no unpleasant effects on the frame. Let the sun be ever so fiery, you may expose yourself to its influence all

day long, without dread of a catastrophe; for here there are no miasmata to sow the seeds of fever in the constitution, and none of those stagnant vapours that oppress life in a tropical country and bring on premature old age. To this dryness it is unquestionably owing that the sudden changes of temperature, common during the summer months, are attended with no evil consequences. Not unfrequently the thermometer shows a fall of ten or twenty degrees in an hour, accompanied with a chillness for which the body is totally unprepared; but in no instance am I aware of colds or rheumatisms, or other maladies, following such violent transitions. To invalids, it is needless to add that no climate is more hospitable. Having been myself a wanderer in search of health, I venture to speak confidently as to its merits; and, in proof, I may state, that at the commencement of autumn I have passed the night in the open air clothed in a light summer dress, with no covering but a Mackintosh cloak, and I felt no inconvenience from sleeping thus exposed.

Winter, as is the case in all the Australian colonies, is nothing more than a rainy season.

Snow or ice rarely appears in the neighbourhood of the coast, though on the mountains, or elevated plains of the interior, the former sometimes lies for a few days.

Summer, on the other hand, brings with it a greater degree of heat than we have been accustomed to bear in our native land. It is, however, free from that absence of rain that at times reduces the districts on the Sydney side to a desert waste, and leaves man and beast a prey to thirst. Even during the hottest weather the colonist may always reckon on refreshing rains; the experience of past years having taught him to expect them in January; which, it is unnecessary to say, is one of the summer months in Australia. At that season the showers are never so copious as to replenish the dried-up beds of the streams; but their effect on the withered herbage is such as to work a surprising change: once more giving to the sunburnt plains the hue of returning spring; and this, in such a latitude, is as much as the settler has a right to expect. Let it not be concluded, however, that there are no ungenial days to mar the eternal summer that fills this favoured land.

In common with the whole colonized regions of Australia, it is a sufferer from the "hot winds," which usually make their appearance during the months of December, January, and February. These winds, it is curious to observe, invariably blow from the north-east or north,—in this southern hemisphere, the abode neither of snow nor cutting blasts, but of the fire that dwells within the torrid zone; and hence, as their track necessarily lies over the vast arid plains that abound in that region, they become heated to such a degree in passing southwards, as to pour a current of air, nearly as hot as that from a furnace, all over the southern coast. In many respects they bear a close resemblance to the Sirocco, whose name is familiar to all as that of a wind that rises in the central deserts of Africa, and from time to time visits the shores of the Mediterranean with its scorching breath. But, fortunately for the lands in their course, the "hot winds" come but rarely, perhaps not oftener than six or eight times during summer; and, still more fortunately, seldom last longer than twenty-four hours at a time. No sooner, however, does the vane point northwards, than the atmo-

sphere undergoes a striking change : the thermometer rises rapidly, occasionally standing above a hundred degrees of Fahrenheit ; vegetation is seen to droop ; and, if the blast becomes at all violent, the tender shoots of plants in exposed situations are withered as effectually as by a sharp frost. On the forest, where previously there were sounds of life, the stillness of midnight suddenly falls : its many tribes seem then to have deserted it ; for not a bird is on the wing, nor are heard the cries by which they are wont to break its silence ; all have sought refuge in their haunts from the glowing heat against which their animal instincts are no protection. To the human frame the change is distressing : the cheek becomes flushed, the skin parched and feverish, and a languor ensues, so all-powerful as to render the slightest exertion a burden, under which you feel ready to sink. Those whose occupations confine them to their homes, suffer little in comparison from these uneasy sensations, resorting, on such occasions, to the expedient of closing every door and window, and carefully leaving no avenue by which the external air may enter. By taking these precautions a pleasing

coolness is sure to reign in the house ; and the loftier the roof, and the thicker the walls, so much the lower will the temperature be maintained within. From their deficiency in these two important points, the wooden houses at one time brought out from England fall far short of being comfortable. Their low roofs, combined with the thin boards of which the walls are constructed, afford no shelter from the heated atmosphere, which easily finds its way through the chinks and crannies with which they abound ; and hence there is a general indisposition to inhabit a dwelling of this kind. At the outset of the colony none were in greater demand, chiefly on account of the cheapness and ease with which they were erected ; but since labour and materials have sunk to a reasonable standard, that recommendation has lost its force ; and no one, in choice of a comfortable and substantial habitation, now hesitates about constructing it of the excellent brick with which the manufactories on the banks of the Yarra will supply him.

I have already observed, that the soil which the settler covets most, that which yields him

after due preparation the most abundant harvests, is, in its natural state, the worst to clear, being usually wooded with trees of massive size. This, however, is far from being the general aspect of the country. Everywhere but on these fertile spots the trees straggle away from each other, or form themselves into picturesque clumps; sometimes leaving wide plains untenanted by a solitary shrub, at other times capriciously dotting the expanse, as if planted by the hand of art. Rarely do they stand so close as to prevent a free passage between their trunks; so that you may gallop for miles under their shade, over hill and dale, without meeting any other obstacle than that caused by fallen timber. In truth, as has often been remarked, an English park, with its lawn and scattered trees, gives a better idea of the prevailing scenery than anything else; and but for the silvery stems of the gum-trees and the difference of foliage overhead, would be a true picture of a thousand prospects in this and the other districts of Australia. For the purposes of pasture, it is fortunate that the forests are of this open nature; the more especially as a kind of impenetrable



jungle is sometimes met with, which, if extensively prevalent, would effectually forbid all intercourse between remote districts, perhaps even arrest the efforts of civilisation. In the language of the colony it is called a "scrub;" and a worse obstacle in the way of a traveller can scarcely be imagined. Through a large tract of country of this description, the party which first explored Gipps' Land had to force their way, as they were advancing towards Melbourne with the results of their discoveries. After a short trial of its difficulties, necessity compelled them to abandon the horses, which were found to be worse than useless among the tangled underwood and creeping plants by which the trees were woven together into a woody mass; and, after leaving the poor animals to their fate, the explorers proceeded onwards in Indian file, the foremost breaking open a passage as he best could, while the others followed in his steps. Not only did they find the jungle thus unusually dense, but scarcely an hour passed without their meeting prostrate trees of immense girth, round which it was necessary to make a circuit by the same tedious process that marked their progress, as climbing

over was altogether out of the question. Unceasing exertions alone enabled them to conquer these impediments, and they succeeded in gaining ground, though literally by inches: for after toiling from morning to night in the gloom of the forest, the party were well content to call three miles a satisfactory day's work. Add to this, that for three weeks they were thus encaged; and to crown their hardships, that during that period their stock of provisions came to an end; that their only resource against starvation and a lingering death depended on the success of a native servant in catching wild animals by the way; and some idea will then be formed of the difficulties to be encountered in a scrub, as well as of the dangers attending the advance of those who act as pioneers in these solitudes.

Hitherto no trees have been discovered save such as are evergreens. The "sere and yellow leaf" is, therefore, a thing unknown on their boughs, whose foliage no Autumn lays bare; but, as a kind of substitute, many species shed their bark; and, in place of the beds of withered leaves seen at home when summer is past, each tree stands in the midst of long

rolls of bark thickly strewn around, and curled into fantastic shapes.

In point of beauty, it must be confessed that the greenwood tree of the Australian forests, though often rising to a noble height, and as picturesque in its outlines and attitudes as any that bears a leaf, nevertheless stands far below any individual of our English woods. Not that its limbs are less giant-like or less boldly thrown into the air, but there is wanting the rich burden of foliage which a colder climate heaps with such profusion on the bending branches; and we miss the shade that spreads around each stem, and diffuses the grateful coolness we were wont to enjoy. In comparison with the plumage of the oak or elm, theirs is a scanty sprinkling of drooping, attenuated leaves; a crop so thin sown as to seem as if dwarfed in its early growth by some blight, and to have remained ever since in a state of premature decay. Moreover, to increase their disadvantages, the hues with which they greet the eye, exclude every tint of a bright description; a dull green being the prevailing shade of shrub as well as tree. This it is that tinges every landscape with a degree

of monotony and sadness that could not fail to convey a gloomy impression, did we not see the prospect invariably lighted up by a brilliant sunshine, and diversified by natural features of the highest beauty.

Foremost among the forest trees, in regard to usefulness, ranks the stringy bark (*Eucalyptus robusta*.) Possessing the valuable quality of splitting with regularity and freedom, it admits of being readily converted into shingles or paling, two articles of the greatest importance to the colonist. To the English reader it may be necessary to state, that shingles are wooden slates, and are universally used for roofing in Australia. In shape and dimension they somewhat resemble a brick, except that their thickness seldom exceeds half an inch. For such purposes no other tree has been found so serviceable; and it is to be regretted that it is less abundant in the colony than many varieties that might be better spared. Melbourne, and the other seaport towns are, however, well supplied from Van Diemen's Land, where it occurs in great abundance; and, of late, the importation from the latter colony has risen into a regular traffic: the

one furnishing shingles and paling, which the other repays with cargoes of sheep and cattle.

Of the acacia tribe, many specimens of exceeding beauty are found in every part of the colony. These are by far the most elegant among the native woods, and as an ornament to pleasure grounds none have been cultivated so universally; for which, perhaps, they are indebted to the singular rapidity with which they shoot up wherever the soil has undergone the slightest preparation. Besides this, the bark contains a powerful astringent, rendering it a valuable agent in tanning; for this purpose considerable quantities have already been exported to the mother-country.

Equally elegant, though in a different style, is the tree fern, (*Cibotium Billarderia*,) a colossal member of the fern species, whose favourite haunt is on the shady banks of streams, or the solitary glens in the mountains, where it may be seen rising to the height of twenty feet or more. I have seldom seen anything more beautiful than a group of these giant ferns, peopling some nook by the wayside, where the delicate tracery of their domes, stained of a rich green, and floating lightly

in the air, is a sight full of relief to the eye that has seen nothing for many a weary mile but the sombre monotony of the forest. Transport them to the sands of a desert, and, at a little distance, they might easily be mistaken for a grove of palms; for both trees have the same straight stem, rising clear of branches, and the same feathery coronet, arching gracefully outwards, and bending to every breath of wind.

It is a curious fact, connected with Australian forests, that the conflagrations by which they are often devastated during summer seem to have no effect in destroying their vitality. A tree, after being wrapt in flames from the root to the topmost bough, is further than ever from becoming a mound of ashes. Pass it in the course of a few weeks afterwards, and on the blackened shell—for in this state has it escaped from the ravages of the fire—you see green leaves sprouting forth anew as on the approach of Spring, and numerous shoots beginning to rise from the half-consumed branches. Ere long, it appears to be in full vigour, its foliage not less luxuriant than before; and however often assailed by its fiery enemy, this process of reproduction goes on

each time that the forest has ceased to smoke, nor entirely deserts the wasted stem so long as it musters the strength requisite to stand erect. It is difficult to understand by what means the tree is fortified against these attacks, any one of which would, in this country, number it with the dead; and we have no other way of accounting for the fact, than by supposing that the principle of vegetation resides in one of the inner coats of the bark, beyond the reach of the fire that consumes all the interior wood, and leaves nothing but the charred and hollow trunk remaining. At the same time, it is evident that the sap must be endowed with some quality that enables it to resist successfully the great heat to which it is exposed during the progress of the flames; a circumstance no less essential to its existence than a removal from immediate contact with the devouring element. These conflagrations, of course, occur most frequently during summer, and often rage with terrific violence for many days, sometimes for a longer period. At that season when, from the absence of rain, all that they meet is previously converted into fuel, the simplest cause suffices to occasion

their ravages. A spark from a shepherd's pipe falling on the parched grass is enough, or the unextinguished fire of a benighted traveller spreads to a neighbouring tree, and the forest is in a blaze for miles around. Less damage, however, actually occurs than is warranted by the aspect of desolation that a burnt wood afterwards wears; partly owing to the indestructible nature of the trees, to which I have adverted, and partly to the fact, that in a short time the herbage springs up to replace what was previously consumed, and the land becomes fitter than ever for pasturage. In truth, this appears to take place before the ground is scarcely cooled; and the settlers themselves have no scruples in setting fire to the withered grass on the less fertile parts of their location, with the view of preparing the way for the sward that immediately comes up as green and nutritious as it was the reverse before. On this their flocks browse with the greatest avidity, in preference to any other pasture; as the tender shoots are then full of juices, and at no time supply more moisture and nourishment than in this state. The truth of this is well known to drivers of bul-



lock-teams, who, in the course of their journeys, frequently have to pass through spots of this description. From experience they have learnt, that nothing tempts their cattle to stray so much as the sweetness of this new grass, the taste of which will be remembered for a long time afterwards; and, when liberated, the team will make every effort to return to the spot, however distant, where it was found growing. If successful in making their escape, the driver spares himself the trouble of searching in other directions for his lost bullocks, and forthwith directs his steps to the last grazing ground of this description, sure to find them regaling on its luxuriant richness.

The sole danger to be apprehended by the agriculturist from the "bush fires," arises from their likelihood to communicate with his crops; a misfortune that occasionally befalls a clearing, where the settler, from carelessness has omitted to guard against it by taking proper precautions. These are simple enough and easily effected. All that is requisite is to leave a cleared space of sufficient breadth round the outside of the boundary fence, and, from want of combustibles, a stop

is thus put to the progress of the burning forest, which rarely extends to the future harvest in its path, unless the wind happens to be blowing strongly at the time.

Another kind of conflagration, although of a less alarming nature, proceeds from the ignition of the withered herbage alone; the flames in that case clinging to the ground, along which they creep at a slow pace, disregarding the forest that waves uninjured above them. This, though of more frequent occurrence than the other, is viewed with little or no apprehension; since, by drawing a few furrows of naked earth round the farm, and keeping it always freely ploughed up, the settler is enabled, by this expedient, to exclude his subtle adversary as effectually as if a stream of water were interposed. Such, however, is the heedlessness of many, that acres of valuable produce are often placed in imminent jeopardy from neglect of this duty, and not unfrequently fall a prey to the devouring element, by which they are reduced to ashes in the course of a few moments.

## CHAPTER VI.

Squatting.—Likely to be Permanent in the Colony.—The Sheep-Farmers are Squatters, without an Exception.—Dangers of Exploring, and the Rewards.—Townships virtually selected by Settlers.—The Discoveries of the Latter.—Their Sagacity in traversing the Country.—Necessity of a Compass to the Uninitiated.—Roads.—Inns.—Infrequency of Robberies on the Roads.

BETWEEN the agricultural and pastoral farmer a wide difference exists, as to the tenure by which their lands are respectively held ; although, on looking at the magnitude that characterizes the operations of both, the absence of any preference on the part of the colonists for the one branch more than for the other, not less than the even pace by which both have advanced to prosperity, we should scarcely fail in coming to the conclusion that, on this important point, both are placed on an equally favourable footing. This, however, is by no means the case. The former is the tenant, or, more frequently, the

proprietor of the land he cultivates; while the latter is no more than a "licensed squatter," or, in other words, a tenant-at-will of the crown—liable, at a short notice, to be dispossessed of his pasturage, which he is bound to vacate as soon as a purchaser has made it his own. To all appearance, no measure could be devised to fall with more crushing effect on the enterprise of the sheep-farmer than one like this—a measure that tends to place the occupancy of his land on a foundation as precarious as that which may be claimed by the wanderer in the desert; and yet it is no less true, that the amount of inconvenience that may be traced to this source, (for hardship is too strong an expression to use,) has hitherto been wonderfully small; and experience has proved that, on the whole, a wiser and better system could not have been framed, nor one that could harmonize so well with the interests of the crown and those of the subject. Why the squatter transfers a large capital to the locality upon which, strictly speaking, he is merely a bird of passage,—clears away the forest, constructs fences, rears dwellings, and undertakes other expensive

operations, and does all this as confidently as if his right to the soil was indisputable,—is due to the simple fact, that the probabilities of being dislodged by a purchaser are too remote to excite the slightest apprehension. So distant, indeed, is such a prospect under the present circumstances of the colony, that I have no hesitation in affirming, that the squatter is as secure in the occupation of his land, as if he had purchased it; nay, more, that he is likely to exercise, for many years to come, all the privileges of a legitimate proprietor as he at present enjoys them, and even to transmit his right of possession, as a patrimony, to his descendants. Various causes concur to establish this anomalous state of things, which may be explained in a few words. In the first place, it may be necessary to premise, that the proportion of fertile land to that of poor quality, is as limited in this as it is in the other Australian colonies. Of the many millions of acres that unite in forming the district, it may be safely assumed that the tithe, and probably not even that, displays that rich mould whose luxuriant vegetation invites the labours of the husbandman with

promises of golden harvests. A much larger portion is characterized by fertility of a less striking nature, although capable, by artificial means, of yielding a profitable return ; and it is not improbable that, at some distant era, when towns and villages arise amid the now unpeopled pastures, even this will be called upon to supply their markets with food and produce. But the residue, comprehending the great bulk of the colonial territory, presents a dreary prospect of barren and irreclaimable soil to the eyes of the husbandman, although, from the abundance of indigenous grasses that clothe its surface, none is calculated to find more favour in the sight of the master of flocks and herds. It is this description of soil that falls more particularly within the province of the sheep-farmer, and it is this that offers the fewest temptations to a purchaser. The first-class land, on the contrary, is the chief attraction of buyers. Its fertility needs little stimulus from the application of labour,—an expensive commodity in the colony ; and obtain it as you must at a high rate, it is, nevertheless, a prudent purchase. Such land, and such alone, is sought

after by landholders; and, in the progress of years, we may expect to see the last acre of it departing from the crown, whose stock is thus melting away,—sometimes slowly, sometimes more rapidly,—according as cultivation outstrips or falls behind the wants of a population ever on the increase. But with regard to the pastures under occupation, these, it may be confidently predicted, will remain, as now, without the pale of ownership; not only for their inferiority as arable land, but because, even with a view to sheep-farming, the profits of that profession would by no means recompense *the purchase* of the soil. Undoubtedly, the upset price, as fixed at one pound per acre, for land of whatever quality, operates to this end. That it is far too high for inferior soils is obvious enough, and, indeed, admits of being proved to a demonstration; but even were a reduction to take place to the one-fourth of that price, it is still to be doubted whether the grazier would find this an inducement to become the proprietor of his location. One obstacle to his wishes consists in the formidable quantities of land which his vocation requires. To carry out his schemes on a suf-

ficient scale, it would be imperatively necessary to purchase, not by hundreds or thousands of acres, but by tens of thousands. Few in this country are aware of the vast tracts of land sometimes comprehended in the "station" of a single individual. In one or two instances, they exhibit the dimensions of a small county, measuring about sixteen or twenty miles long by six or eight broad; but, on an average, their extent may be assumed as reaching from three to four miles in length by as many in breadth. Hence it is manifest that, however trifling be the upset price of land per acre, the prodigious amount absolutely essential to the operations of the settler, swells into a purchase of such magnitude as to come within the reach of none but the wealthiest capitalists. Even these are unlikely to come forward with such a view either now or at any future period, for the reason I have before stated,—that the profits derived from sheep-farming are sufficient only to remunerate the capital invested, so long as the land is obtained for little or nothing; but would be totally swept away were the latter the subject of increased burdens. Altogether, from



a consideration of this, and other reasons which it would be tedious to adduce, it may be inferred that, in the present attitude of the colony, no fear need be entertained by the squatter, that his land is the less firm in his grasp because he holds it by the slightest of ties. As no one, therefore, ever contemplates purchasing land merely for grazing purposes, all the residents upon the pastoral tracts are squatters after this fashion, and are protected in their occupancy by the crown, to which each pays ten pounds annually for a license. Whatever be the size of the location, or "run," as it is called, no higher sum is paid; and this, and a small tax levied on stock for the maintenance of police, comprises the whole of their burdens. Besides this advantage, the squatter enjoys the privilege of transferring his right of possession to another; and this, undoubtedly, constitutes a very valuable item in his resources. It enables him to resign either the whole or a part of his run into the hands of a new occupant, receiving, in return, such a consideration as may have been agreed upon. In the eye of the law, however, these transactions are regarded as

indefensible, so far as the transference is made the subject of a pecuniary bargain; notwithstanding which they are of daily occurrence: so much so as to have passed into the universal custom of the colony; and no settler ever gives up his location except at the instance of certain weighty reasons, with which it may redound to his interest to comply. Some disguise, of course, is attempted; and thus it is that in no part of the endless advertisements of stock for sale, will you find a separate value placed on the "run." But the sums demanded for improvements, and the enhanced prices of everything, fail not to indicate, that in this shape a fair equivalent is obtained for the land which the advertiser professes to "give in" along with his sheep or cattle. Hence a substantial difference prevails, according as a flock is sold with or without its run. If the latter is given in, a considerable addition is, on that account, imposed by the seller on the current value of the stock in the market. This is the most usual method by which the emigrant with capital transforms himself into a sheep-farmer, should his inclinations lead him in that direction;

and, indeed, it would be difficult for him to accomplish his wishes in any other way, unless he is prepared, at the outset, to undertake a perilous and toilsome expedition in search of lands where none might dispute his claim as a discoverer. Such an achievement, he will quickly discern, is better fitted for the powers of the older settlers, who rarely reject an opportunity of disposing of their stations, relying upon their own sagacity and perseverance to guide them to new ones in the unvisited regions by which they are encompassed. By many who are gifted with a restless spirit of adventure, which here is as prevalent and for which there is fully as wide a field as in the backwoods of America, this practice of relinquishing their stations is converted into a pursuit, in the exercise of which they become the willing, and not always unrewarded pioneers of civilisation in these wilds. Be it confessed that, great as are the charms of an inroad into the interior, the discovery of a fertile tract is attended with more substantial results to the explorer than the empty honour he gains by enlarging the boundaries of our geographical knowledge. Such excursions are con-

stantly taking place during the favourable season of the year. From time to time a little band will gather on the border, and taking with them a scanty supply of provisions, no more than sufficient for a few days' consumption, will cheerfully bend their way through a *terra incognita* to some point to which conjecture has attached a flattering reputation. In the prosecution of their enterprise they brave a series of dangers, and task themselves to a degree of fortitude that elsewhere would be extolled by Fame among its acts of heroism; but in these remote regions, hair-breadth escapes and unparalleled privations, serve only to illustrate a border tale, unheard beyond a narrow circle. Often entangled in impervious woods, where it is as hazardous to retire as to advance; harassed by insidious savages, against whom their numbers are no protection; sometimes doomed to wander amid a labyrinth of ravines and precipitous mountain-chains, until their last meal is expended; and, worse than all, delivered up to the torments of thirst for two or three days at a time: such are a few of the dangers they must face, in order to crown

their undertaking with success, or, more frequently, to regain the settlement with life. Under the want of water, their horses rapidly sink ; and when this calamity overtakes the party, their situation becomes one of extreme peril,—compelled to retrace their way on foot with frames reduced to exhaustion by previous toils and sufferings. Nevertheless, the narrative of disasters attending such expeditions is surprisingly meagre ; partly owing to the hardy nature of the explorers, by which they are qualified to endure fatigue and the want of the necessaries of life for a longer period than most men, and partly to the experience acquired by repeated explorations, whereby they have learnt various expedients to prolong existence and to surmount difficulties that appear insuperable to the unskilled. The disastrous fate of Mr Gellibrand and his companion, must, however, be fresh in the recollection of every colonist. Against the dissuasion of their friends, they ventured forth into a track then unknown, and, from that day, were never heard of more. This occurrence took place during the early days of the colony ; and, strange to say, although the

country into which they penetrated has long since been settled, and minutely surveyed, no memorial has been discovered that might throw some light on the mystery of their disappearance. One thing alone is certain, that they either perished from hunger, or fell by the spears of the aborigines: the latter being the most probable cause of their untimely end.

Supposing, however, that an open and grassy plain is met with, furnished with its due complement of water-frontage; then the first care of the discoverer is to note the landmarks around it as exactly as possible, so as to be able, on his return to the colony, to describe its position and boundaries to the commissioner of crown lands. On doing this, he is forthwith provided by that officer with a license to depasture the locality denoted, on condition that possession be taken within a certain period. Thenceforward none but the flocks belonging to the holder of the license are at liberty to range over the tract claimed by him; and no other settler may establish himself within its limits without incurring the liabilities of a trespasser. Here, there-

fore, he remains undisturbed, so long as he takes out an annual license for his land, reaping the fruits of his arduous toils in the uncontrolled appropriation of all that the soil may produce, and looking forward to the time when it may suit his interest to surrender his rights to some fellow-colonist, who is less able to explore for himself, but more willing to purchase the discoveries of others. Then, once more, a new station is to be sought for, at the price of the usual hazards ; and thither our adventurer migrates, accompanied by his household and pastoral riches ; and in the midst of roaming aborigines, and parted by many a league of mountain and wildwood from the hope of succour, rears his huts and spreads his flocks as industriously as before. Amid every difficulty he holds his position, till surrounded by the advancing tide of occupants of whom he was once far in front ; and finding among these an advantageous offer for his location, again proclaims himself outward bound, and prepares anew for a weary journey.

Such is the process, gradual though unceasing, by which the colony has expanded

from an area of a few miles square, into the ample dimensions it now displays ; and such are the rewards that stimulate the enterprise of those by whom that undertaking has been accomplished, and who seem destined to carry its frontier still deeper within the vast continent they inhabit. Liberty to occupy the spot they have discovered, is all the compensation they seek ; and assuredly a more trifling favour could scarcely be granted by the crown. Yet the boon has done more to encourage the efforts of the sheep-farmer, to plant in the interior a numerous population, and, in its ultimate consequences, to increase the wealth and prosperity of the colony, than any other measure derived from the councils of its rulers. It has taken the business of exploring wholly out of the hands of government, previous to which it was customary to despatch expensive expeditions to remote latitudes, in order to collect information, as much for the benefit of science as for the settlers themselves. But at present that practice is on the wane, if not altogether laid aside ; and the government is content to follow in the wake of those who thus assume one of its



duties, and by whom it is relieved of a burden not unfrequently of too costly a nature to be cheerfully borne by a colonial exchequer. One important result is found to arise from this state of things : the colonists are virtually left to choose for themselves the townships that must of necessity be formed at a distance from the central government. Strictly speaking, it is the office of their superiors to do this,—to determine where and when shall be laid the foundations of each civic community ; but, in effect, both wisdom and policy have taught them to be chary in the use of this onerous function,—the more so, when we consider that nothing is more easy than to pitch upon a locality apparently with every qualification for a township ; but it is by far a more difficult undertaking to fill it with inhabitants. The first steps, therefore, in the selection and formation of a town are silently taken by settlers, who find it for their interest and convenience to do so. It is seen, for instance, by one or two individuals, that a certain point on the coast possesses some advantages as a seaport ; thither they resort to ship their wool when the

proper season arrives ; others again open establishments to supply the former with the stores which their stations require : thus the nucleus of a settlement is formed by a few individuals, whose wants, ere long, call around them a considerable population, and create a regular intercourse with other ports. At length, when experience has set its seal on the prosperity of the place, it is judged fit to be taken under the immediate protection of government. It is declared to be the seat of a township ; and surveyors arrive, by whom streets and roads are traced out, and the country in the vicinity divided into allotments. A magistrate, with a constabulary force, makes his appearance ; and justices of the peace are nominated from among the principal settlers. By these arrangements no fresh impulse is, perhaps, communicated to the progress of the settlement ; but, unquestionably, much is done to increase the comfort of its members. They may now exchange their mud or wooden huts for substantial dwellings, as it is within their power to build them on ground of their own purchasing. The want of a tribunal to repress the lawless, and to punish offences against

persons and property, is felt no more ; and they need no longer submit to injury rather than encounter the delay and inconvenience of seeking redress at a distant court of justice. To beginnings like these the principal towns in the colony may trace their existence. Melbourne, Geelong, Portland Bay, Port Albert, owe gratitude to none but their early inhabitants for an appreciation of the advantages with which nature has blessed the position of each. Long before government thought it time to stamp them with its approbation, they were thriving though infant settlements ; founded in obscurity by a few traders or squatters, whose foresight and judgment described their superior capabilities, and whose predictions as to their future greatness, have been realized even earlier than they anticipated. In illustration of this, I cannot forbear adverting to a passage contained in the report of Mr Batman, the first to land on the bay of Port Phillip, and under whose auspices Melbourne may be said to have sprung up. " I quitted Port Phillip on the 14th day of June, and arrived at Launceston after a passage of thirty-six hours, which will at

once show the geographical advantages of the territory to Van Diemen's Land; and, in a few years, I have no hesitation in affirming, from the nature of the soil, that the exports of wool and meat will form a considerable feature in its commercial relations." Little did the writer imagine that, within five years from the date of these words, his prophecies should not only have been fulfilled to the letter, but that Van Diemen's Land itself should absorb some portion of those exports to which he alluded. Such expressions were, probably, regarded at the time as the exaggerations of a discoverer who wished to draw the most flattering picture of the country he had explored; and certainly, when we consider that, at the same period, Van Diemen's Land was filled to overflowing with stock of all descriptions, nothing could appear more irrational than the idea, that its supplies should be furnished by a territory which could not then boast of a single flock, and was, in truth, an unreclaimed wilderness. At the present day both sheep and cattle are exported from this same district to the markets of Launceston, where they find a ready sale; and in

addition, moreover, to Van Diemen's Land, the exportations embrace the colony of New Zealand, to which considerable quantities of cattle have been lately transported ; and, in spite of the longer voyage and its increased dangers to the conveyance of live stock, it would appear that so much success has attended this undertaking as to induce many stockholders to embark in it.

We are far, however, from asserting that by pecuniary views alone are the colonists guided in their exploring journeys. The latest researches into the geography of Australia are the performances of those who could have had no other object before them but the extension of scientific knowledge. The expedition of Mr Eyre to the northward of South Australia, from which several important discoveries resulted, particularly that of the extraordinary Lake Torrens, have been conducted almost entirely at his sole expense ; and were attended with serious losses, which did not, however, damp his ardour in the cause of science. Of the same nature was the excursion of Count Stroleski into Gipps' Land, which was projected and equipped by

his companion and fellow-sufferer, Mr James Macarthur, one of a family to which, as the first to introduce the sheep, Australia owes more than it ever can repay, and whose devoted zeal for its interests appears to have grown into an hereditary sentiment.

All honour, therefore, to the patient, enterprising, often baffled, but still undiscouraged settlers of Australia. They are the true wealth of that distant land; and in vain would the riches of this country be borne thence, were the sheepfolds amid its forest wilds without the brave hearts that watch around them. It is, in truth, their indomitable will that forms the life and soul of Australia's prosperity, by which she has sprung up into existence, and by which her future greatness will be upheld. Take that away—take away the unshrinking spirit that goes forth into her grassy deserts, and though you may boast of a hardy frame and toil-worn hands, your strength will come to nought, and your hopes will die away beneath the constant strain on your energies, which is the portion of the settler—of him who leads a life of privation, solitude, vigilance, and self-denial.

Among the perils that beset an exploring party, I have forbore to touch on that which arises from the possibility of losing their way. This is, perhaps, the least likely of all accidents to befall a native-born colonist, or those who have spent many years in the bush ; for, in process of time, the latter seem to acquire a species of instinct that guides them with unerring exactness to whatever point they aim at, no matter how distant it be. To strangers, this faculty will appear as incomprehensible as it did to myself on the first occasion I saw it displayed. It was on my first trip up the bush, my companion being one who, from his earliest years, had lived a forest life, and was well acquainted with its ways. At a short distance from Melbourne, it was necessary for us to forsake the bridle-road we had been following, and to strike across the country, which everywhere presented the usual prospect of wooded hill and valley, marked by no prominent feature to which we might lift our eyes from beneath our leafy covering, and note accordingly the route to be taken. We had not long dived into the shade before I became conscious that I was moving in a state

of helpless bewilderment, with regard to the direction we should pursue ; and, had it been necessary to have retraced our steps, I should have been equally at a loss to tell whereabouts lay the road we had quitted. More than once I looked around in the hope of catching a glimpse of some distant mountain, and thus gather an idea of our position. But no ; I strained my eyes to little purpose, and should have speedily desisted from the attempt, had I then been aware how difficult it is, when tall trees close in around you, to descry an object, unless it rears itself close to your side. Meanwhile, my friend rode on before, threading his way through the trees almost mechanically ; rarely turning round to take an observation, nor hesitating once as to the proper course, but confidently tracing his way, under the guidance apparently of some clue in the air, that revealed itself to no eyes but his. Now and then we were compelled to deviate widely either to the right or left, in order to avoid a ravine or inequality of the ground, or occasionally a patch of scrub ; and no movement is so apt as this to lead you astray ; as it requires much experience to calculate with



accuracy the distance to which one is carried out of the way by such detours. Nevertheless, we failed not to regain the straight line as readily as if it had been a beaten track ; and, though such interruptions were pretty frequent, and of course added to the chances of being misled, they had so little effect on my conductor as to land him only a few yards from the spot where our journey was to terminate. Such is the mode by which the bushman traverses the woods, through which he proceeds with more or less caution according to his familiarity with the general features of the country they clothe ; caring little for roads or pathways whenever he is at home,—and, indeed, in the exercise of his vocation this is indispensably necessary,—and in other districts to which he is a stranger, referring rather to his remembrance of the nearest known localities and their relative bearings in his memory, than to the usual facilities that travellers in such situations employ. Indeed, your true bushman disdains the use of a compass, except when engaged in exploring ; on other occasions, a glance at the sun, as his steed wends its way, is all that he deems

sufficient to set at rest any doubts as to the correct course. I would not, however, recommend to the unpractised to discard the needle during their first trips up the country. They will find its services of infinite use, if ever it should be their fate, as is not unlikely, during an apprenticeship to a bush life, to become acquainted with the awkward truth, that they have lost their way, and know not to what point to turn. In such a predicament it will enable them, although ignorant of the true direction, to steer a straight course, and thus avoid the tendency to go round and round in a circle, to which all are subject who wander through the forest with no certain step. Frequently it has happened that an individual thus situated, after spending a summer's day in an attempt to reach his bourne, comes at length in sight of some object that seems familiar to his eyes, but which, to his mortification, he recognises as being only at a short distance from the spot where he lost himself. Under these circumstances, if the day be declining, there is no other resource for the wayfarer than to make the necessary preparations for passing a night in the bush. He unsaddles

his horse, therefore, and unwinding the tether rope, which is invariably carried in coils round its neck, secures the animal to a tree, leaving it to pick up what herbage it can within the limits of its line. A fire is then kindled,—as flint and steel are to be found in the tobacco-box with which nine-tenths of the colonists are provided; and wrapped in his Mackintosh, and with his saddle for a pillow, our wanderer betakes himself either to sleep or to watch till morn shall arise and shed new light and hope upon his efforts. But within the limits of the settled districts, the consequences of straying are really more annoying than dangerous, as the tracks are few that are not crossed by the bridle-roads that serve to connect the station of a settler with those of his neighbours; and some one of them therefore is sure to be encountered by fixing upon a certain direction, and steadily resisting all temptations to turn aside in search of a better.

From Melbourne there is no difficulty in reaching the more important localities in the province, the lines of communication being in general of so marked a nature as to leave a traveller, even if fresh from his ship, but

little cause to deviate, and still less to demand the services of a guide. True it is, that these roads, as it is the pleasure of the colony to style them, have nothing in common with the hard, smooth, macadamized highways to which we are accustomed. They are simply clear and well-defined tracks, ploughed into dust by the passing wheels of heavy drays which struggle as they best can over the inequalities in their way. It is remarkable, however, how few impediments exist of a character dangerous to the transit of vehicles; and as a general observation, the nature of the country is highly favourable to internal communication; so much so, that the construction of a few bridges, and one or two precipitous ascents avoided, would rob nearly all the roads in the colony of their worst features, and render them practicable for any description of carriages. All along these roads a number of inns have lately sprung up, where you will meet with entertainment and accommodation of the kind that is usually furnished by a hedge alehouse in England. This, however, is quite enough for a bushman, whose vocation is by no means favourable to the

cultivation of fastidious tastes; and so long as they provide him with food and shelter, albeit of an ordinary description, it would be a hard matter to persuade him that there was anything more to be desired. Before their appearance, it was customary for travellers on the approach of night to alight at the nearest station, and, without further introduction than the necessity of their position, proceed to take up their abode under the roof of the settler, certain of receiving a welcome reception, although perfect strangers, and perhaps never likely to meet again. This is still the case in the unfrequented districts of the colony, where the claims of hospitality are regarded in the light of laws; and many a settler submits to much inconvenience rather than be denounced as the niggard and churl who would begrudge the rest and refreshment it would be difficult to obtain within the compass of several miles. It must be owned, however, that the stations lying in immediate contact with the most frequented lines of road, were subjected to a severe tax by reason of the throng of travellers who were thus wont to congregate at each on the approach of night,

in numbers for whom the scanty accommodations of a hut were very insufficient. At such places the kindness of the owner must have been sorely tried, when, as was often the case, he was called upon to satisfy the wants of a dozen or twenty guests—a thing that happened not upon rare occasions, but as a matter of almost nightly occurrence, one body no sooner departing in the morning than another rode up at dusk to supply their places. Then the usual fare in the bush was set before them,—mutton and damper, washed down with copious libations of tea; and after discussing the prices of wool and the prospects of their neighbours, the party stretched themselves on the floor, wrapped up in cloaks and blankets, in readiness to start at break of day. Mutton and damper, methinks, some one exclaims, are no very expensive items to the settler who can furnish both from his own location. But such as have entertained this daily influx of visitors, know right well how enormous is the consumption of both during a year, and that it is not without cause they have to regret their proximity to a main road.

It is a fact worthy of note, the correctness

of which will be vouched for by all who have resided in the colony, that robberies on the roads are of the rarest occurrence. You may journey from one end of the district to another, so profound is the tranquillity that exists, without arms or means of defence, and with as little fear for the assaults of the highwayman as may be felt by him who is whirled along on a railroad. The young gentlemen, therefore, who, in anticipation of dreadful encounters with bushrangers and the aborigines, provide themselves, ere parting from their parents, with a small armoury of guns and pistols, and plentiful stores of ammunition, will do well to dismiss the apprehensions that excite such warlike preparations. Let them rest assured, that on no occasion will they ever find it necessary to carry arms for the protection of their persons except on the furthest verges of civilisation, where the settlers are confronted by the "wild blacks," who are prompted, by their slight knowledge of white men, to acts of a more daring nature than ordinary.

Once only, as I have before related, was the peace disturbed by the presence of bushrangers ;

and it is more than probable that the attempt will never be repeated : while, with respect to outrages of a less daring stamp, the criminal calendar for the last six years might be searched in vain to produce half-a-dozen instances of individuals being robbed beyond the bounds of Melbourne, or the other towns in the province. This I do not adduce as a proof of the superior morality of the population, nor of the laudable vigilance of the police ; for neither to the one nor the other are the settlers indebted for the security that favours their roaming propensities, but simply to a custom that prevails among themselves. The truth is, that money is rarely seen in the bush ; and few of its denizens make a practice of carrying it about their persons. In all the transactions where its interference is necessary, the settler, instead of drawing his purse-strings, writes an order for the amount upon his agent in Melbourne, and the affair is then considered to be satisfactorily adjusted. Wages are paid ; accounts, no matter how trifling, are discharged in this way ; and even the few shillings of expense incurred by a night's sojourn on the road are liquidated by the same arrangement. Hence, neither



the huts nor the pockets of the settlers contain anything to tempt the cupidity of the evil-disposed, who, if ever so much inclined to cry "Stand and deliver," are too well aware that not all their ingenuity could extract a copper from those who invariably carry no money.

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## CHAPTER VII.

A Ride in the Bush.—A Bush Horse.—Costume of the Settlers.—The Bullock-Driver.—A Creek.—Facilities for the Formation of Tanks or Reservoirs of Water.—Snakes.—A Bush Hut.—Silence of the Forest.—Feathered Tribes of the Woods.—“The Laughing Jackass.”—Fire in the Forest.—Frequency of Fires.—The Station.—Accommodations.—Tea and Tobacco, the sole luxuries of the Bush.—Out-Stations.—A Shepherd’s Duties.—The Native Dog.—The “Scab.”—Cattle Stations.—“Planting” Cattle and Horses.—Cattle-Hunting.—The Aborigines.—Pleasures of a Settler’s Life.

HAVING said this much regarding the road, let us now trust to it as a rough but honest conductor; and as, amid our wanderings about the environs of Melbourne, we see it ever pointing to the forest that belts the distant horizon, our curiosity is roused to know something more of the world in whose recesses it terminates. Let us, therefore, sojourn for a while with the children of that “far countree,” and see them in their forest homes. Our preparations are soon made; for he who goes a-roving in the bush must bear in mind, that long rides and a heavy burthen will bring the best

of horses to the hospital ; and, therefore, the less he adds to his own weight, the better for his own comfort and that of his steed. Besides this, no bell ever summons you to dress for dinner, neither has fashion set up her mirror in these woodland solitudes ; so that the wardrobe you carry on your person serves equally well for the road or the table, and eke for sleeping in when blankets are scarce. In a short time, therefore, we are all ready to start, and, with bridle in hand, we are waiting for our companion and guide, who has some more last-words to say to a parting friend. Meanwhile, let us take a look at the animal he bestrides. It is a regular bush horse,—versed, as well as its master, in much of the lore that is gathered in the shade of green trees,—equally disposed to journey from sunrise to sunset at a sober walk, or to break into a stretching gallop in pursuit of the half-wild cattle, who defy his rider's efforts to collect them into a body. Cast him adrift, and, though his own paddock be a hundred and fifty miles distant, you will find him, ere the week be over, quietly cropping its well-remembered pastures ; or, let the night be dark and your path undistinguishable, and

throwing the reins on his neck, no eye is then so keen as his to trace the winding labyrinth that conducts you to the hut and its blazing hearth. His coat is surprisingly sleek and fine, considering that all the grooming he gets is a roll on the grass when his day's work is done. On the near shoulder you see where his master's brand has printed certain initials in ruffled hair; and the forelegs show that at one time the hobbles have galled the skin: so that now you are prepared to identify him, should these signs ever appear in the pound-keeper's list. Doubtless a critical eye will suggest that the ribs stand out in rather bold relief; and true it is that he parted with much substance during his last journey, in which he accomplished forty miles a-day for the best part of a week; his sole fare being the parched herbage covering the few yards of space allotted to him by his tether-rope. Nevertheless, though past the certain ages, and bearing tokens of the wear and tear of hard service, he is still fitted to be a faithful servant; for severe usage is slow to act on the hardy frame and the great powers of endurance which constitute his chief excellencies; and as for spirit, give him the

spur, and he will clear a prostrate gum tree in a style that shows the fire of youth has not altogether departed.

Most of the horses in the colony are either importations from Van Diemen's Land, or are descended from stock introduced by the early settlers from that island. There is no want of blood among them ; for Arabian as well as British sires abound in every district ; and the pages of the stud-book are just as often quoted, and its importance as readily acknowledged by the Australian as by any patron of the turf at home. In truth, no little stimulus was given to the rearing of horses by their high prices during the early times of the settlement. In these days it was thought worth while to import several cargoes from the countries where their reputation stood the highest. Some shipments, in consequence, took place from South America, which was applied to, notwithstanding the long sea-voyage so pernicious to animal life. Besides that quarter, the island of Lombock, in the Java seas, has furnished a multitude of fiery little ponies, possessed of much activity, and not easily to be discomfited by toilsome journeys.

From these and other causes, have prices been considerably reduced ; and you may now obtain, for forty pounds, a very superior hack, the value of which, three years ago, would have ranged from eighty to a hundred pounds.

I have said that fashion has few courtiers in the wilderness to which we are hastening. But this I am inclined to think is a mistake. A more careful survey of my companion's outward man, induces me to believe that, deep in the dark woods in our front, we shall find an oracle whose voice has been consulted in these equipments rather more than private taste. Something there is of a desire to cultivate a rough outside, which, if the truth be told, is reckoned highly genteel by the gentlemen of the bush, and, at least, possesses the merit of being in keeping with the sylvan scenes they frequent. It is difficult, to be sure, to shine in the homely appointments to which necessity, as much as fancy, condemns them. Hats of Indian grass, shooting coats of fustian, nether garments fortified on the exterior with a casing of kangaroo leather, and half-boots, once black, but now of the latest mud colour, form no very picturesque

costume ; yet those who study to be the observed of all observers, contrive to throw over the whole a kind of piratical air, by girding on black leathern belts, with huge brass buckles, and by clothing their bronzed visages with moustaches and beards of Turkish luxuriance. I fear, however, that much of the intended effect is lost by being associated with the peaceful, if not ungentle pursuits of counting sheep and driving cattle ; but place a few such figures on the deck of a low black schooner,—her locality somewhere about the line,—and I have no doubt they would create a sensation not to be described on board of the emigrant ship with which they are rapidly closing, the like of which no imitation on land could pretend to equal.

In the meantime we have left behind us the unpaved streets of Melbourne, famed for the gutters that meander from side to side in deep-worn channels, which, it would appear, are purposely neglected, in order to instruct the population in leaping during the day, and to furnish bruises and broken limbs by night for the advancement of medical science. It is now the dry season ; so that we have no

occasion to ford Elizabeth Street, which, during the rainy months, changes into a dangerous rapid, the crossing of which then becomes an operation requiring no little nerve and caution. Some talk there was of establishing the Humane Society's apparatus on its banks, soon after a child was nearly drowned in venturing across ; but the rumour died away on the approach of summer and the dry weather. Our road requires no finger-post to point it out. Though neither fences nor ditches bound the sides, and you are free to stray into the open forest, through which numberless paths and cart-tracks straggle in various directions, no one of them displays the breadth of dust nor the deep ruts that betoken a road much frequented by drays from the country. And here, a couple of miles from town, we overtake one of these vehicles, creaking and groaning as it lumbers slowly along with its cargo of tea and sugar for some station in the interior,—the driver stalking along with his long whip over his shoulder. Long before we came up with him, we heard the report of that pliant thong echoing like a pistol-shot through the wood, mingled with the shouts and out-



landish cries by which he urges on his oxen. One of the qualifications of a bullock-driver, and upon which he prides himself not a little, is to be "full of strange oaths ;" and, truly, he overflows with maledictions against the eyes, hearts, bones, legs, and heads of his sluggish team. Remonstrate with him on his intemperate use of them, and he will tell you that Strawberry or Sweetlips hardly move so fast from the application of the lash as when they hear a handsome oath thundering from their driver's lips. His master's station, we learn from him, lies near our route ; and glad will he be to hear that his dray is "started." When this step is taken, the anxieties of the settler are much diminished, as now he is assured that his property has escaped the mishaps to which the air of a town exposes it. The fact is, that drunkenness is the besetting sin of this class of men, as it is more or less of the lower orders in the colony ; but on this point the bullock-driver is universally admitted to bear away the palm from his fellow-subjects. In his ideas, to enter Melbourne, or any other town where intoxicating liquors may be procured, is the same thing as to hold

a saturnalia so long as his means last, or credit is to be obtained. During this period, with a reckless disregard of his master's interests, the team is left to shift for itself, and is handed over to the care of anybody, or nobody, just as chance may direct. Fortunate the settler who possesses, on such occasions, some "fidus Achates" in town, to look after the ill-fated dray ; to superintend the loading ; to ferret out the driver from some low grog-shop ; and, finally, to see it started and moving beyond the influence of temptation. Let him be unprovided with such a friend, and, ten to one, that the oxen are either astray or impounded, the gear stolen, and in neither case to be recovered without considerable expense ; while, in the meantime, he himself is put to no little inconvenience by the non-arrival of the supplies of which he is in daily want. Where is the driver ? He is to be found spending one-half of his time in a low tavern ; the other, either within the walls of a police cell, or in the less dismal durance of the stocks ; under every mutation in a happy state of ignorance regarding the fate of his charge. It may be asked why such men, notoriously so unfit for

any trust, meet with settlers willing to employ them. The reason is, that their vocation, simple as it seems to be, to all appearance demanding no more art than lies in cracking a whip, nevertheless is to be learnt neither in a day nor in a year; and, in reality, requires the exercise of no little dexterity as well as patience. Let a raw emigrant be selected for this duty, and a day's trial of his efficiency will result in as many disasters, if not more, from his want of skill as from the intemperance of the other; so that, between the two evils open to his choice, the settler prefers the alternative of engaging an individual whose capability is undoubted, and whose propensities, if he cannot control, he may, at least, find ways and means of rendering innocuous to himself.

Before us lies the channel of one of the "creeks," with which the vicinity of Melbourne abounds. Looking down from the high bank where we stand, upon its deep and winding course, we see far into the glen down which rushes, in winter, the swollen torrent that, even in that state, seems a slender thread of foam, beside the lofty crags that repress its

turbulence. It is long since the last drop of water has sunk into the sand at their feet; and in the dusky bed nothing is now visible but the bleached rocks, reflecting the glare of the sun from their polished surfaces, and dazzling the eye with their brightness. Here there are no "water-holes;" but how easy would it be, by the assistance of art, to convert this and a thousand similar spots in Australia, into magnificent reservoirs of water!—the sources not only of a measureless supply to those who dwell in their neighbourhood, but of irrigating streams that might diffuse verdure and fruitfulness over localities now annually displaying the sterility caused by the summer's sun. All this it is possible to achieve, by throwing a dam across, where the banks incline their steep acclivities nigh to each other, as they do in many points, apparently for the purpose of inviting such an undertaking. By this simple process a tank is formed, similar to those that occur in tropical countries, by means of which the winter's rains are collected and made to mitigate the fierceness of the dry season. The time, it is to be hoped, is not far distant when we

shall see works of this nature arising under the hand of individual enterprise ; for their utility is too obvious to have escaped the observation of those whose lands lose half their value by the total disappearance, for months, of that element, that at other times runs to waste without a check. It is to be hoped, too, that such projects may engage the attention of the colonial authorities. They are well worthy of an enlightened and protecting government ; and I know of none by which it might dispense more benefits with so little exertion to itself. But, at the present hour, it is perhaps a vain hope to anticipate, either from private persons or from the colonial executive, the construction of works of considerable magnitude. The two giant wants of the colony—labour and capital—refuse to lend themselves to schemes of extensive utility, except on terms so costly as to render their aid unavailable. And much, therefore, as internal improvements are to be desired, I fear that prudence will hardly justify their adoption ; as, under present circumstances, and particularly from the dearth of labour, they must be too dearly bought.

A few miles from town we begin to lose many of the tokens of life and industry that have served to render our ride less lonely. Fewer fences become visible, running their straight lines through the woods, and you catch fewer glimpses of cottages and houses planted in the centre of square enclosures: everything denotes that we are getting into the bush. From time to time we have passed the tracks left by snakes in crossing the dusty road. It is said their bite is poisonous, and causes death in a short time; but whether this faculty be given to all the varieties to which the woods afford shelter, is yet to be ascertained; and I have heard of one instance alone in which death ensued,—a stockman being the sufferer. And, see! there is one sunning itself by the wayside and now gliding off at our approach. “Hold my horse,” cries our bush friend, and instantly dismounts to cut off its retreat. “Stop! don’t you know its venomous tooth is death!” is our remonstrance, as it would be of those who, like ourselves, have only seen a snake’s fangs through the bars of a menagerie, and then at a respectful distance. Without deigning

a reply our friend snatches a twig from the nearest tree, pursues the retreating reptile as it makes its way with surprising rapidity through the short grass where, however, it is more exposed to observation, and dealing a few strokes with his light weapon, leaves it writhing and twisting on the ground. A stranger quickly learns to forget his fears on this score, and, before a few months are over, becomes infected with the antipathy that animates every colonist to destroy a snake whenever he sees it. In truth, he is somewhat shamed into doing this, on perceiving the boys in the colony chasing them with rods in their hands, and making sport of what he is apt at first to consider a very dangerous employment. Dogs, likewise, are soon trained to treat them as vermin, and give battle without any hesitation, although the victory is often obtained at the cost of their lives.

About fifteen miles from town there is a station lying in our route, at which my companion proposes to make a halt for an hour or two. His keen eyes soon detect the track that turns off from the main road and

leads towards the huts ; and before we have penetrated far by its windings, the gleaming of yellow grain is half seen through some distant trees, and announces this to be the site of the home station. A rude fence surrounds the field which is only partially cleared, not a few giants of the forest still dotting its surface ; some towering over the crop, mere pillars of charcoal, while others flourish in full foliage. In the centre stands the principal hut, with two or three others intended to serve as offices. Their whole appearance is characteristic of a half-savage state of existence. The walls are constructed of that material known in the colony as "wattle and dab," or, in other words, a frame of wicker-work overspread with mud, and support a roof covered with rolls of bark which the wooden stretchers that press them down can scarcely keep from resuming their original circular shape. Two or three windows, or port-holes, admit the light, while a huge, misshapen chimney of turf flanks one end of the dwelling in front, which, on the whole, may be considered as a pretty fair specimen of a bush hut. At the door the



master comes out to receive us, and to give us a welcome with all the unceremonious though kindly hospitality of a settler. The interior by no means belies the expectations excited by these observations. Stumbling over a mud floor, moulded by heavy heels into an excellent model of a mountainous region, we find our way to a seat, and, safely balanced thereon, after one or two unsuccessful attempts, for it has a great tendency to topple over, we perceive we are in an apartment that seems fresh from the hand of Robinson Crusoe. The inside of the walls differs in nothing from the exterior except that the mud is a little smoother; but the bark above our heads is hidden from view by a ceiling of canvass stretched across, once, perhaps, of snowy purity, but now sadly defaced by sundry stains and blotches,—the handiwork of a leaky roof and the last rainy season. At one side yawns the fireplace, a cavern of huge dimensions, within which a whist party might ensconce themselves very comfortably, and with plenty of room to spare. As it is now midsummer, instead of the ponderous logs, or rather trunks, of trees that are

wont to roar and blaze as if in a furnace, the light of day descends from a wide aperture intended to serve as a chimney, and fills the vacancy with warm sunshine. Doors and windows of extraordinary architecture complete the picture. Through one of the doors, which boasts of as many crevices as planks, I have a view of another apartment, whose arrangements bespeak it to be the chamber of mine host. Indeed, it would be an excess of civility to ask to be shown over the house ; as from the spot where I sit, what from chinks in the partitions and eyelet holes in the wood-work, I have a pretty fair idea of the length and breadth of the rooms adjoining. All this roughness is rendered still more striking by its contrast with the furniture, which, owing to the proximity of town, is far superior to that usually seen in the bush. Mahogany displays itself in the sofa and table, although both wear a kind of reckless air, as if inured by long usage to the hard knocks of a roving life ; and in one corner a pianoforte halts upon three legs, the remaining member finding no soundings in a deep excavation that lies underneath it. Directly

over the instrument hangs one of the largest blots in the canvass ceiling, indicating that here the floods pour down their heaviest streams ; and while I am pondering how, in a rainy day, the performer keeps her post—whether she sits with an umbrella overhead, or puts on a mantle—the lady of the house, or rather hut, enters and puts a stop to further speculation. She is a native of this new world—an Anglo-Australian ; has travelled nowhere but in Australia ; and has seen no other metropolis but Sydney, where she was born. Like all her sister Australians, the hostess is in possession of no small share of personal attractions, and partakes, to the full, of the style of beauty by which they are characterized. Dark eyes and dark hair generally prevail, and are united to a complexion which seems to own the influence of a southern sun. Though there is no want of rich bloom on the cheeks, it is far less fair than what we are accustomed to see on our northern shores. In truth they are a highly-interesting race, and are gifted with much to win the goodwill of the stranger. In particular, you will observe a gentleness of manners, of tone and

movement, that seems natural to all ; sometimes, it must be confessed, verging upon languor, but at all times conveying the impression of great amiability and tenderness of disposition.

But to return. Bidding our host and hostess farewell after a brief halt, once more we betook ourselves to the shade of the forest, glad to escape from the heat by which we were oppressed during the few moments passed in riding through the little clearing. There is no circumstance more striking on entering the shade than the deathlike silence that greets your approach, and accompanies you in your journeyings ; during which mile after mile passes by with no sound to strike the ear but the tramp of your horse and its faint echoes. Before custom reconciled me to the tranquillity in which nature wraps her Australian woods, I used to fancy that the tornado or the earthquake were nigh at hand, and that another hour would bring with it the thunder and devastation of which this mysterious and unnatural calmness was the forerunner. And if at times a voice comes out of the depths of the forest, it speaks as if in complaint or

anger of the intruders who thus desecrate the stillness of the grave. You recognise its tones in the moanings, the uncouth cries and wild shrieks, that at long intervals rise into the air, arrest the ear for an instant, and then cease as suddenly as they broke forth. These are the woodnotes wild of an Australian forest,—sounds little calculated to cheer a lonesome way; and in this respect sinking far below the melody of our English groves.

The feathered tribes, in general, give utterance to a short quick note, devoid of musical cadence, and as far removed from a continuous strain as the chirrup of the sparrow is from the linked sweetness of the nightingale. Many of the names by which they are distinguished indicate the peculiar nature of their respective cries. Terms such as the bell-bird and whip-bird denote two little birds that tinkle their bells and crack their whips with a surprising likeness to the original sounds. No cry, however, is so extraordinary as that of a bird of the woodpecker species, to which has been given the euphonious title of the “laughing jackass.” Without a note of preparation, the wood resounds with a prolonged horse-

laugh that seems to rise out of the earth close at hand, then dies away in the distance; anon descends from the skies, and leaves you again to silence, with a half consciousness of being mocked by some invisible scoffer, and a pretty strong inclination to knock him down should he appear. "How close the rascal keeps!" you mutter to yourself, when once more "Haw, haw, haw! he, he, he!" rings in your ears, and is repeated for a few moments with increased vehemence, till the chorus is wound up by a screech so unearthly as to make you look round for the "fiends in upper air," who alone could give it utterance. This is the melody of the laughing jackass, whose appearance, by the way, is grave and demure to a degree. In size it resembles the jackdaw; and, with its long straight bill and dusky plumage, has few pretensions to beauty. By the settlers it is said to be very active in destroying the snakes; and for this reason is never shot at by them. How naturalists have termed it, or in what order it is placed, I am at a loss to inform the reader; all I can say is, that it unquestionably belongs to the genus of solemn jokers.

Among the feathered tribes of this country, I know of few that will remind the sportsman of home. Indeed, the game list may be reduced to the quail, snipe, and varieties of wildfowl, to which may be added a species of bustard, known among settlers as the wild turkey. The latter is a bird of solitary habits, rarely permitting you to come within gunshot, and can only be secured by stratagem. On the lakes and rivers you see myriads of wildfowl, that float on the water with an indifference to your approach that renders them an easy prey. The first among these to strike the attention are the black swans and ducks, and many beautiful varieties of cranes.

With scarce an interruption we continued to make our way through the country, pausing now and then, whenever a waterhole occurred, to refresh our horses. Sometimes this is an operation of no little difficulty, owing to the steepness of the overhanging banks, which compel the poor animals, before they can plunge their nostrils in the pure element, to assume an attitude as if preparing to throw a summerset. From mismanagement or carelessness it occasionally happens that they slip

into the pool, and are lost beyond the possibility of recovery. At length, on gaining the summit of a hilly range, by a woody cleft up which our horses clambered with difficulty, but which, nevertheless, displayed the traces of dray wheels, we looked down upon one of those sights which none but dwellers in the wilderness may behold. Hovering over the plain below were clouds of white smoke that covered, as with a mantle, the usual prospect of wide-spreading foliage; and, to the right and left of our position, the mountain side was pouring forth streams of smoky vapour, that spouted up high at first, and then floated down on the tops of the trees, as if requiring the support of the latter to convey them on their course. "Is the forest on fire?" I inquired of my companion; for this was the first I had seen of such spectacles. "No," he replied; "I think it is only the grass burning: however, we can ride forward and see for ourselves." In a short time we had descended to the foot of the hill, and soon felt the warm air blowing towards us from the smoking plain. As my friend had conjectured, it proved to be only one of those fires, so common during



the summer, by which the withered herbage alone is attacked. Still, though there was no danger, the appearance of the wood into which we rode was highly striking; we found it filled with a hot misty cloud, in which the trees loomed forth to double their size, while all around fell the gloom of twilight. The flames came on at a slow pace, and were accompanied with a strange hissing and crackling sound, that frequently broke forth into slight explosions like the snapping of a detonator. Occasionally they found some shrub more combustible than ordinary; and then a pillar of fire would shoot up, burn fiercely for a few moments, and sink again to the earth. But, as the grass happened to be short, the fiery line seldom rose above the fuel on which it fed; and it would have been no difficult matter to have leapt across it at any point in its course. Pushing our horses through a gap before us, we crossed the blackened track left by the flames, picking our way amid burning embers from which the smoke was ascending, and gladly emerged into a purer atmosphere than that which hung over the consuming element.

The frequency of these fires is the principal cause of that absence of underwood, that renders the forest so pervious in all directions, and gives to Australia the park-like appearance which all agree in considering its most characteristic feature. A shrub, in fact, no sooner rears its head from the ground, than it is cut down by the next conflagration; and by the same agency fallen timber quickly vanishes: so that all under the leafy shade becomes as smooth and trim as if daily devoted to the scythe; and the trees themselves, far from displaying the rugged exterior we commonly ascribe to wildwood scenery, appear as if lately transplanted from some well-regulated lawn. One thing alone detracts from their appearance; and that arises from the traces of previous fires, by which their sides are scathed and pierced with black cavities—fearful memorials of the flaming torrent in which they have been enveloped. It is not always, however, that the progress of the flames is as leisurely as on the occasion just related. On the treeless plains, on which, during summer, the natural herbage is converted into hay as dry and inflammable as tinder, the speed with

which they sweep along is almost incredible ; and, ere the first column of smoke begins to roll upwards, their front is a mile or more in advance of the spot where ignition commenced. It is in vain for the shepherd, at these moments, to drive his flock to a place of security, as nought but the swiftness of a racehorse could compete successfully with the coming fire ; but, happily for him and his charge, it seldom occurs that they suffer material damage, formidable as seems the danger by which they are threatened. The very rapidity of the flames constitutes their safeguard, flashing over them for a moment and vanishing the next ; an exposure to which the fleecy coats of the sheep are well adapted to bid defiance. In the course of the journey I have seen little to exercise the observation of a geologist. A cursory survey of the country it is impossible to make, by reason of the forests that clothe the soil and obscure every natural feature. And even were the surface invested with objects of interest, it would be difficult to detect these save by the closest inspection ; so baffling to vision is the screen of foliage by which they are hidden. The passing traveller, therefore, is debarred

from gaining more than a faint outline of the physical conformation displayed by the surrounding country, the general characters of which, as far as may be judged, offer nothing new to knowledge, and agree with all that has been said and written regarding Australia on this head. In one or two spots, however, I was led to conclude that glaciers had probably rested on the flanks of the older mountain ranges. In some of the valleys which descended from their recesses, I fancied that I detected traces of the *moraine*,—that rocky rampart which these icy seas push down before them in the course of their descent to the plains. Besides these proofs of their existence, the sides of the Pyrenees, a granitic range, afford indications of those water-worn cavities ascribed by M. Arago to the action of the rills that descend the crevices of the glaciers. On the whole, I am persuaded that a careful survey of Australia will furnish conclusive evidence that her rocky crests have penetrated through the plains of snow or ice in which the higher mountain chains were wrapped, and that such has been her state of existence for a long period of time.

Our destination is at length in sight : a low hut, the picture of rustic neatness, and far superior to the habitation I have formerly described, having reason to boast of its shingle roof and the porch by which you enter. Before the door lies a garden, railed in and sloping down to a water-hole, whose brimming waters, ever clear and sweet throughout the long reign of summer, have been the chief attraction in the choice of this site. Further back stand the offices and barns, shaded by noble gum trees; and a large paddock, enclosed with a stiff fence, covers many an acre of the native pasture; while another fence surrounds a patch of growing wheat,—both enclosures appearing like diminutive plots amid the open expanse in which they are situated. Little there is to remind you of home; for everything has been reared after a rude fashion. Yet this is the abode of life; and how welcome the sight to him who feels, as he enters the light of the clearing, that going down into the forest has been, in truth, like “going down to the great deep”! Gentle reader, if ever it be your fate to wander alone in these solitudes—to journey for hours amid endless forests whence life has

fled—to look upon vast plains where nothing moves or stirs—to recognise no trace of your fellow-beings in all that you see—to pass under the gloom of burnt woods, and brush by the blackened skeletons of giant trees—to pillow your head at night with the clear starlight of this country falling between bough and leaf on your grassy resting-place—to wake at the call of midnight birds, and to listen to their mournful cries mingling with the sighing wind,—this is a page from the bushman's existence; one that occurs not once, but often. At these times your thoughts will wander far away, and your spirit will sink as you contrast the present with the past; and a voice will whisper, this is an exile in a land where all is as strange as it is savage: would that my lot had been cheered by the presence of my fellow-creatures! at least some traces of their steps would render more tolerable the utter loneliness that dwells around. But away with such fancies! Morning brings you nearer the haunts of men: you descry the curling smoke mounting above the trees; the barking of dogs is heard; and you see the children playing at the hut door. This is no longer Australia; it is

England: and though her garb is rude and homely, her speech comes forth to welcome you, and you forget your dreary ride and its depressing influences; or remember it only to dwell with the deeper satisfaction on that humble roof which unites you to your country and recalls its dearest associations.

Our accommodations within are, for the bush, on a superb scale: a real table and real chairs,—not the few planks nailed together, nor the wooden stools which you find as substitutes in other huts; and, moreover, an old deal packing-box figures as a book-case, and contains a dozen well-thumbed volumes; and there are doors to the inner apartments, and curtains to the four panes of glass that admit the light, while everything is scrupulously clean,—thanks to my entertainer's housekeeper, who is regarded as the paragon of her profession all over the country side. At the early hour of six we have tea served up. This is the beverage of the bush; master or man, you will find no other liquid but this to moisten your clay; and if you wish to indulge, you must be satisfied with the kettle and its temperate contents. At dinner, the cups are

ranged beside the plates as at breakfast, and the servant pours out as many libations as you please. The same thing is done at supper; and between meals, whenever you feel thirsty, the cry is for some more tea, which speedily makes its appearance. The oceans that are thus disposed of amount to something quite incredible; and confirmed toppers never emptied so many hogsheads as a regular bushman does boxes of tea. Certain it is that the former never feels half so happy over his bottle, as the other when his cup or tin pannikin of sugarless and creamless tea is in his hand—the only refreshment he seeks after his long and wearisome journeys. All other liquids of a stronger description are almost universally banished; not so much, it must be confessed, from choice as from the utter impossibility of obtaining them in the interior. Before a keg of rum reaches its destination, unnumbered are the dangers through which it must run the gauntlet. Drays *will* upset on bad roads, and their cargo be wrecked beyond the hopes of salvage; faithless drivers *will* broach the cask, and make merry with what was to gladden their masters' hearts; and,



worst of all, should it safely arrive, on the news being spread, the whole country side will flock to judge of its quality, and *will* remain until the last drop is drained, and the possessor nearly driven to the brink of despair. No wonder, then, that the prudent settlers prefer loading their dray with something more enduring than the ill-fated fire-water.

As a substitute for bread, we have damper,—the staff of life in the backwoods of Australia. Take a mass of dough, shaped like a thin cheese, cover it over with hot embers, let it remain till the crust is hard, and then scrape away the ashes, and you have damper before you. With your knife cut off a wedge and hand the loaf to your next neighbour. Be not particular if the aforesaid knife has just been employed about your mutton chop, as spare ones are a luxury you must not expect in the bush; and if, as a last resource, you think of wiping yours on the table-cloth, ~~ten~~ to one such an article is unknown within the compass of twenty miles. To well-baked damper you speedily become reconciled, despite of its inferiority to the leavened loaf, in comparison with whose spungy lightness the close grain

of the other tastes to great disadvantage. The very best, however, is rather apt to awaken visions of dyspepsia among those who are strangers to the free air of the forest.

I am sure our entertainer's dinner equipage must be a source of grief to his fellow-settlers. You may search far and wide in the bush before you find anything half so magnificent. No tin or pewter ornaments the board, as among the envious; but we are regaled with plates of delft, and dishes of the same; and not more than the half of them are cracked. This is an extraordinary pitch of refinement; and, to crown all, the contents of the dishes, besides the everlasting mutton that figures at every meal, display some unusual dainties, in the form of potatoes and other vegetables; and what hut can equal that? Truth to say, at most stations, the bill of fare is reduced to two dishes and no more. You have mutton and damper to-day,—mutton and damper will appear to-morrow; and, from that day till the end of the year, your dinner is mutton, boiled, roasted, or stewed, or otherwise dressed as seemeth good to the hut-keeper. Dinner is no sooner despatched, and the last bowl of tea

swallowed, than each guest draws forth his tobacco-pouch, and smoke begins to ascend in clouds. Give a thorough bushman his tea and pipe, and his enjoyment is complete. On every emergency, and on every occasion where the tea-kettle is unattainable, you see him appealing to the latter for consolation and advice. On his lonely rides it comes to cheer his spirits, or to while away the hours when sultry noonday imprisons him to his hut. The perplexities of a doubtful path it helps to smooth away; and many a sheep or horse owes its recovery to the incessant activity of its master's pipe. Among other nations, great store is set by their length; but as things are usually reversed at the antipodes, brevity is here considered the soul of a settler's "clay." The *ne plus ultra* of perfection is to shorten the stalk to within a degree of blistering your lips; and if you add to that a colour like the blackness of a coal, yours is without a rival, and becomes the admiration of bushmen's eyes. On a winter's night many are the measurings that take place regarding the coveted shortness, while a party is assembled round the blazing logs; and many the com-

parisons touching the much-desired ebony complexion ; and much contention is aroused according as victory is decided one way or another ; and rumours run of certain defeated pipes being dyed, in secret, of a superlative jet, by their owners, and then coming forth to strike dismay into their opponents. Pipes such as these, of extraordinary merit, are too precious to be carelessly handled, and are usually enshrined in cases of silver, by which they are protected from all accidents by field and flood ; but the ordinary practice is to wear them in the hatband, after the graceful fashion adopted by the Irish peasantry.

Our entertainer's station may be regarded as a fair sample of the numberless locations into which the settlers have shared the province ; and a description of its management will, therefore, place before the reader the ordinary routine of similar establishments ; as, with little variation, the same observations extend to all, whether they be on a greater or smaller scale. Their stock amounts to three thousand sheep, which is considered rather above than below the average, together with a few head of cattle and some horses.

The run extends over an open country, sparingly timbered, intersected by a chain of water-holes, which the winter's rain swell into a rivulet during that season; and its limits enclose a far greater space than in this country would be allotted to a similar number of sheep, and perhaps more than is considered requisite even in Australia. It is, however, a desideratum with every settler to secure a wider range of pasturage than is at first necessary for his flocks, for the purpose of shifting the sheep from one spot to another; but more especially to provide a sufficiency of pasture for the annual increase, which would find no sustenance except for this precaution. With this view he plants his outposts at the furthest distance from the main station consistent with convenience, appropriating thus the intermediate country, which, although partially depastured at the outset, in no long time becomes overspread with the rapidly-increasing flocks. The run is limited, indeed, that does not possess its out-stations. These are solitary huts, tenanted by a shepherd in charge of a flock, and are separated by considerable distances, sometimes by miles, from

the principal one at which the master resides. At the latter are found a few acres of wheat, which, by the aid of steel-mills, is ground into flour for home consumption ; a paddock for horses, barns, wool-sheds; and here the sheep-shearing takes place. The life of a shepherd is well described in the following sketch :—

“ The duties of a shepherd in New South Wales are exceedingly simple. A flock usually consists of from 400 to 500 ewes, or from 600 to 1000 dry sheep; three flocks being folded at one station. The shepherd is required to take his sheep from the fold in the morning, not later than an hour after sunrise; to keep sight of them on the pastures throughout the day; and to bring them back at sunset to the fold. They are then counted over and left in charge of the night watchman, whose duty it is to take care of the flocks in the folds until the morning, when each flock is again counted and delivered over to the shepherd. In the lambing season, on well-managed establishments, the ewes about to lamb are withdrawn from the flock and kept separate, under the care either of the watchman or of some other person appointed for the purpose, for a

few days, until the lambs are strong enough to travel with the flock. At shearing-time, the flocks are brought in rotation to the home-station, to be washed and shorn. It is then the shepherd's business (unless he be also a shearer) to follow his sheep and take care that they are kept as free as possible from any kind of dirt, until the fleece is in a fit state to shear, which, in general, is the case about the third or fourth day after the washing.

“ From this account of the ordinary duty of a shepherd in New South Wales, it will be seen that almost any one is capable of taking charge of a flock. Sheep are subject to very few diseases; and with the treatment of these either the master or the overseer will be conversant. In such cases, the shepherd has only to follow diligently the directions he may receive from those under whose superintendence he is placed; and, if possessed of common intelligence, he will soon be capable of acting for himself. In fact, a weaver or button-maker, after a few months' experience, will generally prove a better shepherd in New South Wales than the man who, having been brought up as a shepherd in England, may

have acquired habits and prejudices exceedingly difficult to shake off, however unsuitable to the new position in which he is placed. In proof of this, it may be noticed, that some of the best superintendents of sheep in the colony are natives of London, Manchester, or Birmingham, and that few professed English or Scotch shepherds are entrusted with the care even of a single flock. The duty of a watchman is as easy as that of a shepherd; he sleeps by the fold in a watchbox, trusting to his dogs to awaken him in case of the approach of a native dog, or any other cause of alarm; he counts the sheep in and out, and shifts the hurdles. Nor is the life of a shepherd at all irksome to those who have been accustomed to sedentary occupations. On the contrary, such persons have, in various instances, become strongly attached to it; which will not seem surprising, when it is considered that it is a life of very great ease and freedom from care. Indeed, it is commonly remarked of the shepherds, that they are more healthy, and seem much more cheerful and contented than any other class of farm-servants. The wages of a shepherd or watchman have been of late



about £30 a-year, on an average, with from 7 lbs to 10 lbs of meat, 10 lbs flour, 2 ozs. of tea, and 1 lb sugar, per week; or, in the place of tea and sugar, milk. £20 a-year is, however, as much as, at the present low price of wool, can be given, with profit to the sheep-owner; and out of this sum a man of frugal habits may lay by a considerable sum yearly, more particularly should he learn to shear, by which he may put a few pounds into his pocket every summer, in addition to his wages; and still more so, should he, by care and good management, get charge of a breeding flock, and obtain a prize for rearing a large number of lambs. Again, if he be the father of a family, with two or three sons, from 12 to 15 or 17 years' old, he may, after a short time, take charge of a station: the sons going out with the flocks, while he acts as watchman; in which capacity he will have many hours unoccupied during the day, which may be employed in improving his cottage and making his home comfortable. He may also cultivate a garden, or even a small field of corn; whilst his wife would find full employment in domestic matters, the rearing of poultry, &c.; and,

should there be daughters of sufficient age, they will be sure to obtain good situations as servants in respectable families."

Although the life of a shepherd is the very reverse of laborious, as appears from the preceding sketch, it is impossible for him to discharge his duties efficiently without keeping a constant and vigilant eye over his charge. As the sheep are always separated into distinct flocks, in which they are classed according to their ages and sex, much care is requisite to prevent them from breaking their respective bounds and intermingling with each other. During the hot weather this mishap is the more likely to happen, as, under the influence of the oppressive heat, the shepherd is then more disposed than at any other time to nod and fall asleep at his post. Perhaps he is tempted to relax in his watchfulness by seeing the attitude of the flock itself, which, at mid-day, desists from feeding, and, pressing close into a body, remains stationary till the sultriest hours have passed away. Should the shepherd, however, be inattentive when they resume browsing, it is not improbable that they may stray to a great distance,

and introduce confusion into the neighbouring flocks. At night no less care is demanded from the watchman, who sleeps beside the hurdles in a covered box, removeable at pleasure; and who must be ready to start when he hears the native dog howling in the vicinity. This is the only enemy whose ravages the flocks have reason to dread; and besides committing great havoc in the fold, when admission is once gained, its presence is sure to spread terror among the sheep, and to cause their dispersion in all directions. Once scattered, it is not without much exertion they can be collected together; the difficulties of detecting them in the wooded dells in which they are apt to take refuge being very great; and ride as the settler may, over every acre of his "run," it is scarcely possible to reassemble a flock that has been "rushed," without a considerable diminution of its numbers. To prevent this mischief it would be of no slight service to introduce some of those mastiffs of whom a gigantic breed is reared by the shepherds in the south of France, on both sides of the Pyrenees, and in various provinces of Spain, and whose office is to

maintain a nightly watch round the fold. Nothing can be more admirable than the fidelity with which they guard their charge, rousing at the approach of a footstep, and instantly offering combat to the wolf,—an animal much more to be feared than the native dog, which is cowardly to all but the defenceless sheep. Such a suggestion is well worthy of the attention of Australian settlers; and if it leads to a saving of labour, which it is very likely to do, as the services of a watchman might then be dispensed with, I am confident that few will then be prepared to dispute its importance.

Lambing generally takes place during the months of May and June; but many settlers contrive to have three lambings in the course of two years. The rate of increase may be estimated on an average as varying from 80 to 90 per cent.; and on well-managed stations it is frequently higher.

Sheep-shearing usually occurs during the months of October or November. This is the busy season of the settler. All at once the station awakes from the state of torpidity it commonly exhibits, and becomes endowed

with life and activity. Master and servants breathe an unusual spirit of excitement, which may be traced to the presence of the sheep-shearers, who travel in gangs from station to station at this period. Before shearing, the sheep are washed either in running streams or water-holes, in order to remove the impurities which the wool has collected, and which could not be extracted so readily in a shorn state. Among many settlers it is the practice to fold the sheep after being washed; and, being then crowded together, to keep them for some little time in a state which may be called that of stewing. The purpose of this is to allow the yolk, or animal grease, to rise into the wool; whereby not only is its weight increased, but it is in some measure fitted, by the oiliness thus obtained, for the manufacturers, for whose purposes this quality is highly desirable. But, in spite of every care, it is still very difficult to clear the fleece from extraneous substances; and loud complaints have arisen in England, among the wool-buyers, regarding the quantities of stones and dirt that enter into every bale; the effect of which must be to produce an impression

unfavourable to colonial wool. For this the settlers are less to blame than is alleged. None are more anxious than they to acquire for their wool a creditable reputation; but, unfortunately, the means for effecting this have hitherto been wanting; and to this fact must be ascribed what are elsewhere regarded as proofs of negligence or dishonesty. Labour is dear in the colony; too expensive to be constantly directed to the minutiae of any process, with the hopes of a corresponding profit; and it behoves the settler, therefore, to be as economical in its use as possible, and to employ no more than is absolutely necessary. In truth, at one period, it would have been a positive loss to have engaged even the requisite number of hands, so high did the cost of labour rise; and, as a consequence, the stations were undermanned, and all their operations inefficiently performed. Even now it is doubtful, although wages are considerably reduced, whether wool-picking and wool-sorting—another important branch of a settler's duties—could be carried on with the minuteness desirable, without a very material diminu-

tion in the rates obtained by those who undertake this work.

As soon as the wool is considered to be properly assorted, it is then pressed into canvass bags and sent down in drays to the nearest shipping port. Before being shipped, it undergoes another pressing; and, ere finally consigned to the hold, is subjected on shipboard to the powers of a screw, whose effect is such as to compress two of the original bales into the bulk of one.

By those settlers who are independent of immediate returns for their wool, the plan is adopted of transmitting it, on their own account, to an agent in England, and waiting for the proceeds of its sale. This is, undoubtedly, the most advantageous for their own interests, and should be adopted wherever practicable; as thereby they avoid a heavy tax in the shape of the commission, discounts, and other charges which must be endured by him who receives advances from a colonial agent; the said charges being generally double what is customary in England.

One of the worst evils with which the settler has to contend, is the prevalence of a conta-

gious disease called the "scab," to which his flocks are liable ; the effect of which, unless its progress be checked in time, is to deteriorate the wool both in quality and quantity, besides being highly injurious to the health of the sheep. So subtle is the contagion, that a piece of tainted wool, thrown into a fold, is quite sufficient to communicate the poison, which immediately spreads like wildfire among the flock, and can only be eradicated by a tedious and expensive process. An application of corrosive sublimate, several times repeated, is found to be the most effectual remedy. Yet the disease is never wholly extirpated, although the sheep are reported "clean," and frequently breaks forth again after a short disappearance. At one time the evil appeared so serious as to awaken the attention of the colonial legislature, by whom an enactment was passed, bearing some very stringent provisions directed against the extension of the disease. To drive infected sheep on a road, to turn them where other flocks are grazing, and even to have them in your possession, subjected you to heavy penalties ; all, however, without avail. In fact the law be-



came a dead letter, on account of the impossibility of enforcing its provisions. It was in vain to carry them into effect when the infection pervaded the colony from one end to the other; and no one had it in his power to inform upon his neighbour, without exposing himself to retaliation. Some stations there are, however, which this pestilence has never yet invaded; but these are truly "*rari nantes in gurgite vasto*." Let the emigrant, therefore, who intends becoming a sheep-farmer, beware of unclean sheep, as well as the run which they have much frequented; for the ground whereon they have browsed appears also to imbibe the contagion, and to transmit it to fresh flocks.

With respect to the results of sheep-farming, it may be laid down as a general rule, that the sale of the wool should suffice to cover all expenses connected with the station. On well-regulated establishments there is usually an overplus, to a small amount, after making the necessary deductions; and this rises, or ought to rise, in proportion to the magnitude of the station; for the larger it is, the less expensive becomes the management. But it is important to observe, that the settler derives his

profits principally, if not entirely, from the sale of his surplus stock, the value of which, as it stands in the market, represents his yearly gains. Of late the prices of sheep have fluctuated so greatly as to set at nought all previous calculations ; and no settler can tell, with any degree of certainty, how much his accumulating stock should realize during the forthcoming year. This is an evil which I trust will soon pass away. It has been generated by the commercial embarrassments which have overtaken the colony—the consequence of that grasping speculation which spread every sail and steered boldly to distant ports, careless of the brooding tempest, which finds no easier prey than the ill-trimmed and holiday vessel. What might have been predicted then, has now come to pass : of the mercantile firms that arose in the golden days of land-speculating and overtrading, the majority are no longer in existence ; many are tottering to their fall ; and the rest, few in number, owe their salvation to some lucky chance rather than the original stability on which they were based. There is, moreover, this disadvantage attending the ruin of such establishments : that no

part of the small community in which they figure is too distant to escape being affected, either directly or indirectly, by their disappearance. And thus it is that a partial check is given to the operations of those who are the customers of the sheep-farmer, and who, as a class, have little or no concern in the transactions of commerce. But so long as a market for wool is found in England, the sheep-farmer need not murmur loudly at his accumulating flocks : for while their fleeces pay all expenses, he can afford to wait till better times arrive ; more fortunate than those who must either effect sales or close their establishments in despair ; and, in a word, all that I have seen of his present condition, has convinced me to the full, that he is placed in the situation of one who does not lose ground, but whose progress is merely suspended for a season.

Many individuals prefer a cattle station as being more advantageous than that of sheep. The reasons for this choice arise from the comparatively small expense required in the management of the former. A single stockman is competent to superintend several hundreds of cattle, whose animal instincts enable the

settler to dispense with the extreme vigilance demanded by sheep, and without which the preservation of the latter, apart from their management, would be an utter impossibility. Not only have cattle no enemies to shun, but it is their nature, in this country, to cling with a strong attachment to the locality on which they have been reared, and to bound themselves by a circle, beyond which they have no wish to stray. This also has its disadvantages : for, on being removed to a new station, it is only by unremitting attendance that they can be prevented from returning to their old haunts ; and, for the first two or three months after removal, a man must be kept constantly watching or " tailing " them, until their repugnance to the strange pasture wears off, and they show no disposition to desert it. How they, as well as horses, succeed in finding their way back to the original station, is sometimes inexplicable. The expedient has frequently been tried of selecting a circuitous route ; as it was imagined that, by bewildering them while on the road, it would be next to impossible they should retrace all its windings. This, however, their instinct ap-

pears to set at defiance : for, once at liberty, they make no hesitation in taking the most direct course back ; and through an unknown country, and by an untrodden path, will steer as accurately for their native plains as the mariner, by chart and compass, for the port to which he is bound. This is, in fact, a source of much vexatious annoyance to the settler. The time lost in searching for strayed cattle is sometimes very great ; and, independently of the inroads which such an employment makes upon his other avocations, it is not unusual for the operations of a station to be absolutely suspended from the absence of the indispensable horses or bullocks. The worst consequences of the evil are, that it has given rise to a system of concealing horses or cattle, waiting until a reward is offered for their recovery, whereupon the delinquents come forward to claim the amount offered, and restore the lost animals. This, in colonial phrase, is termed “planting ;” and as it is a practice to which the nature of the country offers too many facilities, there is scarcely a settler to be found who has not, at one time or other, been its victim. Discoveries occasionally take

place ; but, on the whole, the unprincipled individuals who carry on this traffic contrive to lay their plans with a skill and audacity that baffles every conjecture as to the real perpetrators ; and even when suspicion is awakened, in nine cases out of ten you must shut your eyes to the imposition, from a want of proper proof. Among the earliest innkeepers on the bush roads, this was no unusual method of turning a dishonest penny. In the morning, the horses of their guests, which are invariably tethered in the vicinity of the inn, were nowhere to be found. Of course mine host was inconsolable at their mysterious disappearance, and knew not what to do, until the owners, to whom the detention was no slight annoyance, volunteered some reward as a stimulus to an active search for their recovery. No sooner was this done, than the animals were sure to be produced from some nook or other to which they had unaccountably strayed—so affirmed the honest host ; and who should know better than he or his myrmidons, the very individuals who, under the cloud of night, had conveyed them to such spots ? Instances, however, occur, where deeds of this

stamp meet with unexpected punishment. On one occasion a settler, who had been fatigued by a long ride in the bush, lay down to sleep under a tree, having, as usual, unsaddled his horse and tethered it at some little distance. Opening his eyes, he was no little surprised to see a stranger replacing the saddle and preparing to ride off with the animal. "What are you doing with my horse!" cried the settler. "Your horse!" replied the other, not a whit abashed; "it is mine; and I would not sell it for a trifle!" What the settler rejoined is of little consequence, as in a few moments a fierce battle commenced regarding the ownership, the result of which went to prove, that might for once was on the side of right; inasmuch as the unlawful claimant was beaten to within an inch of his life. Leaving him in this plight, the victor was about to ride away, when he discovered another horse, which turned out to be that of his antagonist, and which he made no scruples of leading off, and probably retains to this day, as, of course, no one ever appeared to claim it.

Once in two or three months, it is necessary to "muster" the cattle, in order to see what

casualties have occurred during the period they have been running wild. Of all the operations about a station, this is the most troublesome and full of peril. Wandering as the cattle do, in the most sequestered spots, the presence of man rarely intruding on their solitude, they grow up in a semi-savage state; and, like the other untamed denizens of the forest, betake themselves to flight at his approach. Woe betide the unhappy wight who follows in pursuit and boasts not of an eagle eye, a strong arm, and a firm seat on his horse. He requires all three, and no small fund of nerve besides, who drives at headlong speed through the forest; a very different affair from galloping over an open country. If you possess these essentials, or think you do, and are a visiter in the bush, then your host will probably inform you, some fine morning, that he will be greatly obliged by the favour of your company to aid him in driving into the yard a herd that has been running wild for some months. He puts into your hand a stock-whip, a formidable weapon, whose lash is usually five or six times the length of the handle, which seldom exceeds



eighteen inches in length ; mounts you on a horse trained to the sport ; and you are now equipped for a steeple-chase of a desperate kind, disguised though it be under the modest name of cattle-driving. On your way to the haunts of the cattle, your friend will perhaps give you a lesson in the art of wielding your whip ; how to whirl the long lash round your head, and make the woods ring with its sharp crack ; and how you must “ lay on,” when at close quarters ; but forget not to be merciful, as the tip of that thong will pierce the thickest hide and cause the blood to spring. Arrived at the run, you catch a glimpse of the cattle, which desist from feeding on descrying the party. A commotion seems to arise among them ; and then, as if at the word of command, they are off with one accord ; “ heads down, tails up ” is the attitude, and they vanish like the wind. In the next instant your horse is on their track, whether you will or no ; for he enters into the spirit of the chase as keenly as an old hunter ; and all your anxiety is summoned to avoid being dashed against the trees which flit past in dangerous proximity. No easy matter it is to thread, at full gallop,

the throng of stems that rise before your path. At any other time you would pick your steps with caution ; but now, with your horse tearing through them furiously, you cannot tell how soon you may be a crushed and mangled object, struck down by some giant of the woods you have been too late in shunning. Twisting incessantly to the right or left as needs be—now bending low to escape an overhanging branch, leaping over logs and water-runs, clattering through acres of rough blocks of stone—you still manage to keep the herd in sight, which luckily heads towards the stock-yard. There is a flanker, however, who seems inclined to part company from the “mob”; he edges away for a little space; then hesitates, and finally makes a rush up a gentle slope to the right. “Follow him !” is the cry from your leader, who, meanwhile, spurs after the main body, which still keeps together. Favoured by the slight rise, which tells upon the endurance of the fugitive, you rapidly lessen your distance from him. A few bounds more will bring you alongside ; you are preparing your whip for action, when, lo ! he suddenly vanishes from sight, and you find

yourself gazing upon empty space. Pull up for your life: another stride, and horse and rider would have taken a flight into eternity. What is this? Advance a little and look down. You are on the brink of one of those singular watercourses, by which the surface, in some districts, is deeply furrowed; and which give no warning of their presence, until you stand on the brow of a steep bank and behold a yawning gulf at your feet. Down this the animal has precipitated itself with reckless haste; and wondering how it has obtained a footing, you trace its descent by the broken shrubs and branches through which it has plunged. At one spot it has slid a dozen feet or more, dislodging, in its flight, an avalanche of earth and stones; and on seeing this, you shake your head, think the upturned soil very like a newly made grave, and begin to doubt whether a two-year old is worth the putting your neck in such imminent jeopardy. Presently the chase comes into view, clambering up the opposite bank, which it ascends with wonderful agility; though, at times, it is brought to a dead stop by a nearly insurmountable crag. At length the summit

is gained, and once more it vanishes, but not without brandishing its tail in derision of the baffled pursuer. This is not to be endured : down you go in the same moment, and arrive at the bottom with a confused recollection of slipping, sliding, and crashing through shrubs and boughs ; one half of the descent being performed while your heels are suspended in the neighbourhood of your horse's ears. Then comes the ascent ; and no shame to your horsemanship if you seize hold of the mane to keep yourself from falling off ; and, perchance, you breathe a prayer or two, to the effect that the saddle-girths may be all secure, and that you may not be launched by their breaking, like an arrow from a catapult, from your dizzy position down to the depths of the abyss below, where a short shrive would be your portion, if not a speedy death. The level plain, stretching away before you, is at last attained, and your panting steed needs no urging to overtake the distant runaway, whose slackened pace bears witness to the severity of its previous exertions. Again it is placed within arm's length ; and this time you inflict a small dose of chastisement with

the dreaded lash, though not with impunity. Its sluggish blood is stirred, and the wide horns make a rush towards you, the consequences of which are only avoided by your horse darting aside so nimbly as nearly to swing you out of the saddle; and you narrowly escape being impaled upon that horned front. More cautiously the whip is again applied; but all to no purpose: he is in a sullen humour, and his fiery eyes are watching a moment to do mischief. Be wary, therefore, and desist from provoking his savage nature; and, perhaps, when the fit has passed away, you will find him tractable enough to yield to the oft-repeated crack of the whip, and rejoin his comrades at the station.

From all that I have seen of a settler's daily life, one thing is evident, that it is far from being so encompassed with hardships as many are apt to suppose. True it is, that on the borders of the colony, on those spots in the wilderness where gain has planted her extreme outposts, danger and privations are to be found the most abundant: for the same reason, that on the van of an invading army the brunt of war falls the heaviest. But within that

debateable ground all, that is to say the main body of the settlers, sleep in peaceful security : no one dreams of his rest being broken by the war-whoop of savages ; and the only incidents to interrupt the tranquillity of a station are those occasional disappearances of the cattle and horses to which I have alluded, and which merely threaten the settler with a few days' hard riding, perhaps some pecuniary loss. In truth there are few vocations that, on the whole, make such slender demands on one's time and energies. Your morning's canter round the station being ended, the remainder of the day is at your disposal, either for pastime or other pursuits ; or if of an active temperament, and indisposed to lounge away the hours as most of the settlers do, it will not be difficult to discover a multitude of occupations connected with your establishment which will fully occupy your spare time. In fact, I can compare the settler's life to nothing so much as that of a country gentleman, who, from choice, takes an active management in the operations of his estate ; and who, without being compelled to an unremitting superintendence, devotes himself to his pursuit, only

so far as he finds consistent with his convenience. That such a life, therefore, has many charms, is readily to be imagined, when we reflect on the ease and independence which it confers on those who embrace it; and this latter consideration, I am confident, is one of its chief attractions, and the principal cause of that enthusiastic attachment which many settlers evince for its pleasures, banished though they be from all but a precarious intercourse with society. There is, besides, associated with it a kind of wild freedom, nowhere to be found but amid the loneliness and silence of nature, which is inexpressibly captivating to those who have grown up in the trammels of communities, and which far more than counterbalances the disadvantages attending a severance from much that early prepossessions have taught us to consider as necessary to existence. With what feelings must the change be welcomed by the youth lately emancipated from some of the mercantile dungeons of London or Liverpool, and now free to range over the little domain he calls his own; his hours, his movements, and his will, for the first time, at his sole disposal.

No longer chained to the counting-house, from morning to night, he sallies forth from his hut, humble though it be, with a buoyant step and a light heart; and pauses only to deliberate how, or in what manner to employ the vacant moments that were formerly allotted to unwilling tasks. No longer an underling, his orders are obeyed by others, his words to whom are clothed with the authority belonging to his station as their master. With his fellow-colonists he mingles not as a subordinate but as a proprietor, and the equal of those who form the strength and the riches of the province; and, in short, he finds that, without going through all the slow stages of servitude, he has risen into the rank of an independent member of the little world that holds his fortunes. If this representation be truly drawn, it is applicable to three-fourths of the settlers, not only in the district of Port Phillip, but in every colony of Australia, of whom there are few that have not undergone this transmutation. Of late years there has been a movement among the lower ranks of every profession towards the settler's calling; of whom the major part seem to have been



tempted by the prospect of that independence which it was seen awaited only the labours of a lifetime spent in their own vocations. From this cause the denizens of the bush form a very miscellaneous host ; there are naval and military, medical, legal, clerical, and mercantile squatters ; none, in fine, who have not commenced their career in other and very different paths of life. That the change has been a disastrous one for many, is not to be disputed ; but such is far from being the usual result. The majority of those who have made this exchange, seem to have adapted themselves, with a surprising facility, to the novel positions into which they have been thrown : so much so, that were I required to point out the most enterprising and successful of the colonists, I could not select a name that had not been inscribed on the rolls of some most opposite occupation.

Every station is subject to the visits of the aborigines, who still cling to the haunts where they have been reared, despite of the intrusion of the white man and his flocks, whose presence, and especially the spreading numbers of the latter, speedily scare away the

game that formed their principal means of subsistence before the arrival of the colonists. At the station where I was residing, a small party appeared to have fixed their abode for a season, contrary to the usual practice of the tribes, whom no temptations can induce to forsake their wandering habits, and attach themselves to a particular locality. So ingrafted is this propensity in their nature, that every other consideration by which they are influenced sinks before it; and rather than forego the pleasures of a change of scene, the horde will break up its encampment among an abundance of game, and remove to a site where all their address in hunting can scarcely satisfy their wants. It is no doubt an easy matter for the tribe to do this; as beyond the implements used in the chase, they are burdened with little baggage, and that little of the most portable description. At night, a few boughs resting against each other, serve as a defence against the elements to those who consider the shelter thus afforded worth the trouble of erecting; the majority, however, being too well satisfied with the possession of a blanket, or opossum cloak, to demand any

other protection than the fire at their feet. Since the occupation of the district, their numbers have rapidly decreased; and the day cannot be far distant, when a few solitary wanderers will alone remain to remind us of the original inhabitants whom we have dispossessed. The early settlers, that is to say those who landed some eight years ago, speak of having been visited, and occasionally molested, by numerous bands, of whom none but a feeble remnant now traverse their ancient territories. The causes of this sudden diminution, within so short a period, we have no means of ascertaining; at least, neither the habits of the natives, nor their traditions, throw any light on the inquiry, whether or not their numbers were diminishing before the coming of the white men, whose appearance in this, as well as in other savage regions, seems to lead to the conclusion, that they carry with them the seeds of decay to the original occupants of the soil. The introduction of European diseases, their own internal dissensions, together with a change of food,—these are the causes assigned by those who have undertaken to solve this question; but however valid they may

be in accounting for the gradual extinction of the race, it is scarcely possible that these alone are the causes of that mortality which has descended with such violence on some tribes, as to sweep nearly the whole of them into oblivion. I fear much that a too searching investigation into this matter would bring to light some facts, redounding little to the credit of those who were the first to lead their flocks among the "wild blacks." It would, perhaps, be found, that it has not always been the untutored native who has sought the blood of his neighbour, nor that his weapons have alone been raised in anger amid the forest. If all tales be true, there are certain spots in the province that have witnessed scenes in which the white men have acted a cruel and remorseless part; where, for the offence of one or two, a sweeping vengeance has been taken alike upon the guilty and the innocent; where the musket, at the dead of night, has not ceased to play upon its surprised and helpless victims, until, one and all, they were stretched in death where their pursuers found them;—the strong men of the tribe together with the stripling—the mother beside her child!

Of such atrocities there are whispers afloat, inculcating, however, not the settlers themselves, of whose kindness and humanity to the aborigines too much cannot be said, but their servants; the greater part of whom, at the commencement of the colony, were transported felons under sentence of banishment—men who would scruple little to perpetrate such deeds, particularly when an injury offered to themselves or their master's property gave a colour of justice to their indiscriminate retaliation. Although this class is now nearly extinct in the colony, it would yet appear that individuals still remain who have sought to surpass them in the worst acts which they have been thought capable of committing. Not later than last year a circumstance occurred, that excited a strong sensation among the colonists, the particulars of which may be gathered from the following notification issued by government with a view to the apprehension of the guilty parties:—"Whereas it has come to the knowledge of the government, that on the night of the 23d of February last, a party of six or more Europeans surprised a number of aboriginal natives

sleeping in a tea-tree scrub, in the immediate vicinity of the station of Messrs Smith and Osbry, in the Portland Bay district; and then and there barbarously murdered three aboriginal females, and one male child, by gun or pistol shots, besides wounding a fourth female: It is hereby notified, in His Excellency the Governor's name, that with the view of bringing the perpetrators of this great crime to justice, a reward of fifty pounds will be paid to any free person, or persons, who may give such information as shall lead to the conviction of any of the guilty parties; and if such information be given by a prisoner of the Crown, application will be made to her Majesty for an allowance to him of a conditional pardon."

I regret to add that, notwithstanding the endeavours of the settlers themselves, who cordially united with the authorities in their attempts to trace the participators in this wanton massacre, all diligence used for that purpose has hitherto failed; and a dark stigma still attaches to the district where it occurred, as no doubt can be entertained that the assailants were residents in that quarter. But

while we deplore the fact, that there have been, and probably still are, individuals in the colony who deem it no sin to butcher the sleeping natives, it would be wrong at the same time to assume, as many of their philanthropic advocates in this country have done, that in every case of a collision between the European intruder and the children of the soil, the former alone are the aggressors. Among the occurrences of this nature which I am enabled to call to mind, I know of few in which blood was spilt by settlers, otherwise than when their properties or lives were placed in jeopardy. Nor is it at all unlikely that this should be the usual course of things, when it is borne in mind that the aborigines entertain very vague notions regarding the rights of *meum* and *tuum*: that they either do not comprehend, or wilfully misconstrue the warnings addressed to them; and that, short of actual menaces, to which they will respond with violence if in a position to do so with impunity, no method remains by which the settler may check their mischievous propensities, when he himself happens to be their object. More than this: the settler in the

remote districts is exposed to a variety of annoyances, which it is in their power to inflict, should he ever become the mark of their vengeance ; and it is in taking the necessary steps to guard himself and his property against these, that an occasion is given to the conflicts of which we hear. Thus, for example, the cattle in the colony bear an instinctive aversion to the presence of the natives, from whom they will flee, if at liberty to do so ; and the sight of one is sufficient to throw a bullock team into the most admired disorder. Aware of this, the cunning natives will enter the run of a settler against whom they bear a grudge, and, by crossing and recrossing the pastures, will harass his cattle so much, as not only to prevent them from grazing quietly, but frequently to cause their dispersion among the herds of his neighbours. Let the settler interfere while they are engaged in this pastime, and his remonstrances will be met with defiance ; or, should he adopt coercive measures as a last resource, it is more than probable that an affray ensues, in which the superior arms of the Europeans give them a decided advantage over their misguided an-



tagonists, on whose side the loss of life usually falls.

Could the natives, however, be induced to confine their roving habits to the reserves set apart by government for their exclusive use, we should then hear little of those unhappy encounters which, however justifiably necessary by the laws of self-defence, must always leave a painful impression on the public mind. But no persuasion, addressed to their understandings or wants, has hitherto been effectual in withdrawing them from the haunts where they were wont to roam; the fact being, that nothing could overcome the inveterate habits of the tribes, to whose nature a residence of more than a week or two at one spot, is as repugnant as an inclination to cultivate the soil whereon they were placed. Even the temptation of food in abundance has operated only partially in effecting this object: so that, if the humane intentions of the colonial legislature, in providing them with an asylum and a home, have yielded little benefit to the province, it is because they had to encounter dispositions so perverse as to set at nought their beneficent purposes. The measures

undertaken with this view are well worthy of the humanity that forms their basis. The whole province is divided into four districts, in each of which is stationed an officer, termed the assistant-protector of aborigines, under the orders of the chief protector, who usually resides at Melbourne. The objects of this institution, and the nature of the duties assigned to its functionaries, are fully explained in the following abstract taken from "Kerr's Melbourne Almanac" for 1842.

"The homesteads for the assistant-protectors are intended to serve as the centre of operations for their districts, and as an asylum for such aboriginal natives as are disposed to settle. Agricultural operations are to be carried on at those stations, for the exclusive benefit and advantage of the natives. Those who are able, are expected to give an equivalent for what they receive: the sick and aged, and young children, are to be rationed. A drag with six working oxen, a plough, harrows, spades, and other requisites, have been furnished for the use of the agricultural establishments; likewise two government men. These supplies are distinct from an assistant-protector's

tor's travelling equipment, which consists of a cart, two men, tents, &c. The salary to each assistant-protector is two hundred and fifty pounds per annum, with an allowance of ten shillings and sixpence per diem. These establishments are not in any way to interfere with the itinerating duties of the assistant-protector; but, on the contrary, are intended to render their services in this respect more efficient. They are to travel among and sojourn with the native tribes, and, by every possible means in their power, endeavour to induce them to a settled mode of existence. A missionary is to be appointed to each establishment, and a free overseer to superintend the agricultural operations. A free constable, also, to aid the assistant-protector in the discharge of his magisterial functions. In the preceding arrangements there is nothing new: they were originally designed by the government, and adverted to in the Secretary of State's despatch, and were to be entered upon as soon as the assistant-protectors were in a fit position to act, and qualified to recommend suitable localities. It was with this view, and to carry out these designs, that the chief

protector addressed an instruction to each of his assistants, in April 1839, calling upon them to furnish certain statistical and other information, connected with the native tribes of their respective districts,—namely, a complete census of the aboriginal population, distinguishing the number of each family, with the age, name, and sex ; as also the tribe to which they belong ; the principal persons of each tribe, whether warrior, councillor, elder, or otherwise ; also, the boundaries and aboriginal names of districts occupied by each tribe ; the names of mountains, lakes, rivers, and other localities ; the difference of language, customs, and habits of each tribe, with their political relation, whether of amity or hostility ; and any other information bearing upon the before-mentioned subjects, they were desired to communicate. The chief protector receives a salary of five hundred pounds per annum ; out of which he has to provide his horses, travelling equipments, and attendants : he is expected to travel from the river Glenelg to the Hume or Murrumbidgee, if necessary, and to conduct the whole correspondence of the department. One hundred pounds is

allowed him for clerical assistance, rent of office, office furniture, and stationery.

“The establishment of the Protectorate forms a charge on the land revenue, and is maintained at an annual expense of about £4000.”

In person, the aborigines are as well formed as Europeans, their hue varying from a deep copper colour to black. The hair is long and coarse, differing in this respect from that of the natives of Van Diemen's land; who, though perfectly similar in their habits, weapons, and general appearance, bore evidences of a distinct origin in the short woolly hair with which nature had furnished them. Their aspect, however, falls far short of being prepossessing; the features, in especial, being the reverse of all our notions of beauty, and frequently forming a visage which we should pronounce as scarcely human. Low brows, deeply sunken eyes, flat noses, wide mouths, with projecting jaws, are seen in all the tribes, with hardly an exception; and these, when besmeared with ochre, as is done on the death of a relative, make up an assemblage of charms, the effect of which is frightful enough. The males, in general, possess frames that fit them

for the exercise of activity and agility—the qualifications most necessary in the pursuit of prey—although there are many whose limbs display the appearance of much muscular strength. In climbing trees, all are particularly expert, making their way, with the rapidity of the cat, to the topmost bough, when in chase of the opossum, which has taken refuge within it. In the neighbourhood of Melbourne, your attention will be struck by the appearance of many giants of the forest, whose trunks are notched in a peculiar way from the root upwards, the purpose of which you will, perhaps, find it difficult to divine. This is the work of the natives, who cut notches at the distance of three or four feet above each other; and thus, finding a resting-place for their toes, continue to ascend a smooth, straight column, which, from its being devoid of branches or knots, it would otherwise be impossible to climb. In truth, the toes are put to nearly as many uses as the fingers; and you will often see a native pick up stones or sticks from the ground, just as readily with the former as with his hands. Notwithstanding that robust forms are commonly seen

among the tribes, they are altogether incapable of long-continued, laborious exertion, and seem to want the stamina inherent to European constitutions. In a short race with a white person the native will hold his ground ; but on its being prolonged, his powers begin to flag, and he is soon compelled to give up the contest. To a knowledge of this fact, the settlers in Van Diemen's Land frequently owed their escape when surprised by the aborigines of that island, who appear to have been a race of a more fierce and untameable caste than the inhabitants of the Australian continent. On the plain ground their enemies were usually a match for them ; but whenever a rising ground or hill came in the way, and to this they invariably fled wherever possible, it then became a trial of strength and endurance, in which the white men seldom were overcome by their pursuers.

The weapons used are the same as those which have been found in the hands of the natives in every quarter of Australia : the spear, the waddie, and the boomerang, being the most important ; in the management of which they evince an astonishing dexterity,

only to be acquired by unremitting practice from their youth upwards. It was solely by means of these they were enabled to procure the game on which they principally depended for food; and as it is a feature peculiar to Australia, that her forests are less plentifully supplied with animal tribes than any other of which we have a knowledge, the imperfectness of these instruments for the capture of prey has given rise, on the part of the natives, to a degree of address and patience in hunting that must be seen to be comprehended. One day a native brought in a wild turkey, a bird of peculiarly shy habits, and rarely shot by the settler, unless he manages to conceal himself for that purpose. Without employing, however, his spear or boomerang, the native had availed himself of his acquaintance with the habits of the bird to ensnare it in a way which, though apparently simple, evidently demanded the exercise of consummate skill and caution. His only implements were two wands, about six feet long, at the end of one of which dangled a small bird; the other was furnished with nothing more than a loop of cord at one extremity. As far as we under-



stood from his imperfect mode of explaining himself, he had approached as nigh the turkey as he possibly could without risking a discovery; and then, placing himself perdue in a bush, proceeded with his rod to imitate the motions of a bird hovering a little above the ground. Attracted by this, the turkey drew nearer and nearer, till at length coming within scope of the looped cord, was instantly noosed and secured. By the exercise of similar stratagems they succeed in capturing the kangaroo and emu, the largest, and at the same time fleetest tenants of the Australian woods. Both of these are hunted by the settlers, who turn out with greyhounds and follow the chase on horseback. The former, in particular, gives occasion to the display of much horsemanship: it commences with a tremendous burst, in which dogs and riders are left far behind. But this lasts only for a short time; and, usually, after a run of a mile or so, the poor animal is overtaken by the hounds and brought down. On these occasions, many of them will fight desperately, though in vain, against their canine foes, whose sides and limbs not unfrequently re-

ceive wide gashes from the claws of their captives. Others, again, betake themselves to a pool of water, should one be at hand; and there, standing at bay, are enabled from their superior height, to baffle, and sometimes drown the dogs, which can only approach by swimming. The flesh of the kangaroo, though dry, is by no means unpalatable, and somewhat resembles that of roe-deer. By those who have tried the experiment, the tail is said to make very excellent *oxtail* soup; and, from my own experience, a kangaroo steak, cooked though it be after the bush fashion—that is to say, in a very indifferent style—is nevertheless a highly savoury morsel. To the natives, however, all that abides in the woods is game, whether it be fowl, quadruped, or reptile. He who feels disposed to pry into the secrets of a native's wallet, particularly of those who loiter about the outskirts of Melbourne, will discover the presence of certain delicacies not usually seen upon civilized tables. Meat there will be, the contribution of the charitable, in every stage of putridity, mingled with crusts of bread, sugar, flour, roots, and any other articles of food they may have picked up in their ram-

bles. Nothing, in short, comes amiss ; snakes, ants, grubs, all furnish a repast for the famished native, who disposes of them with wonderful celerity, and even considers some species of the latter as *bonbons* of a most delicate flavour. That the cravings of hunger have sometimes been appeased by sustenance of a more revolting character, is, I think, evident from the testimony remaining to that effect ; and it is nearly beyond a doubt that, pressed by famine, they have been led to devour their own species, the weaker and younger of whom usually were sacrificed on these occasions. Yet these instances were far from being of frequent occurrence, and afford no ground for believing that systematic cannibalism ever held its blood-stained banquets among the tribes.

Of the many individuals who have sought this corner of the globe with the hope of bettering their fortunes, it is manifest that a considerable portion have widely mistaken their own capabilities for that purpose ; and that many more have miscalculated the resources requisite for undertaking the vocations they have selected. In fact, there are but two

classes of individuals desired in the colony, and who alone have any chance of succeeding ; viz., the individual with capital, and the individual with labour. Both of these have as wide a field open for their respective qualifications as could be wished ; both will find their riches, whether lying in their coffers or in their thews and sinews, yielding a fourfold increase from being transplanted to this distant soil ; both have within their grasp the attainment of opulence, by the exercise of no more than common industry and prudence. To these, the colony will prove an *El Dorado* ; but by all others it ought to be understood, that the difficulties they expect to avoid by coming here, are not a whit less formidable and perplexing than in the mother country. Neither is this a place for those who rear their visions of eminence upon their abilities. They will speedily discover that the possession of the latter is less remunerating than in the country they have quitted ; not because the settlers are incapable of appreciating talent, but because the settlement has not yet reached that point where sufficient numbers exist to foster intellectual pursuits. All the profes-

sions may be regarded as either overstocked, or as so feebly supported as to hold forth no inducements for their practice. In the bush, there are numbers of professional gentlemen who, finding in Melbourne no scope for their avocations, have wisely turned sheep-farmers, and retired thither, where their presence, especially that of the medical fraternity, confers a benefit on their own and the surrounding districts. Of those who have remained in town, there are none, unless rendered independent by other means, who succeed in deriving more than a bare competence from their occupations. I repeat, therefore, that the idea of acquiring wealth ought never to be entertained by him who cannot bring pecuniary resources to his aid. Some there are, no doubt, who have risen to the position of opulent land and stock holders, unassisted by any other means than their own shrewdness and industry ; and a few more may be said to date their prosperity from some happy speculations during the prevalence of the land-selling and land-purchasing mania ; but these are individuals who, in any position of life or under any circumstances, would have amassed

wealth; and their success, therefore, ought not to be assumed as militating against the force of the preceding rule. What amount of capital should be taken, depends very much on the qualifications of the intending emigrant, and the path he feels disposed to enter. As sheep-farming is the staple profession of the colony, it is one in which those embark who have followed none at home, more particularly as it requires little previous preparation to master the whole of its mysteries. For their guidance, it is to be observed, that the greater the scale on which it is conducted, the more lucrative are the results; and although a small capitalist can, and will attain independence in this line, he must at the same time forego the hope of realizing a rapid fortune. I do not consider that an individual, possessing less than a thousand pounds, could count with certainty upon success in undertaking this profession: even that sum is the minimum with which a beginning could be attempted; and the possessor of no more should, if possible, unite with a partner of equal capital; in which case, the prospects of both would be materially elevated. In this department, how-

ever, as in every other, it is the great capitalist who holds prosperity at his command. But in Australia, the term "large capital" bears a far less comprehensive signification than in England. He who commences with five thousand pounds, and from that upwards, is a man of capital ; and such a one is certain of attaining opulence, and need not look forward to a long residence in the colony for that purpose. Nor is it necessary that his funds should be invested in sheep-farming, or in any other of the occupations that are reckoned the most profitable. The interest of capital is here so great, that loans upon mortgages, which are no less secure than in England, form one of the safest and most advisable modes in which property may be invested. The rate of interest varies from ten to fifteen per cent.; and though this appears exorbitant to English eyes, it is, and has been, the usual rate for many years past—not only in this, but the sister colonies of Australia. Let the owner, therefore, of a few thousands turn to this quarter with implicit confidence, should he be loath to venture his all in the more remunerating though precarious uncertainties

of trade. Nor let him be deterred from doing so, by the apprehension that so high a rate of interest is indicative of nought but the desperate circumstances of the borrower: for a little insight into the secrets of commerce, as practised here, will demonstrate to his satisfaction, that its profits are so vast as to justify not only this amount, but that even a higher rate might be given with safety, as is not unfrequently done.

THE END.

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